Man allegedly points gun at son-in-law. » PAGE 3

Second suspect in robbing taxi driver falls. » PAGE 7

Hafa Adai!

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'HR 83 may be considered soon'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

All is not lost for CNMI investors holding E-2C visas as H.R. 83 may still be calendared for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives before the lower chamber adjourns at the end of the year.

According to gov.track.us, a website that allows you to track bills in the U.S. Congress, H.R. 83, which includes three CNMI provisions that deal with immigration, could

See HR 83 on Page 4

NEW DEPARTMENT

MARK RABAGO

Division of Fire and Emergency Medical Services staff pose with members of the House of Representatives after the latter passed a bill yesterday creating a new Department of Fire and Medical Services within the Executive Branch of the CNMI government. Senate Bill 18-057, SD 2 passed unanimously on a 20-0 vote and now goes to the desk of Gov. Eloy S. Inos.

See story on Page 5

Senate report: Harsh tactics didn't net Osama bin Laden

RELATED NEWS

- Senate probe catalogs brutality against detainees. PAGE 17
- Detainee Zubaydah a key figure in Senate report. PAGE 17

By KEN DILANIAN
AP INTELLIGENCE WRITER

bin Laden

WASHINGTON (AP)—After Navy SEALs killed Osama bin laden in Pakistan in May 2011, top CIA officials secretly told lawmakers that information gleaned from brutal interrogations played a key role in

See SENATE on Page 4

Govendo: Post-election challenges will open door to non-stop battles

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Allowing post-election challenges to voter eligibility would open the door to non-stop battles and would only frustrate the election process, according to Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

The Legislature has already provided guidelines on how to challenge voter eligibility, said Govendo, and "these challenges are allowed up to election day and not afterwards."

Govendo made the ruling in a written order yesterday granting motions to dismiss the election contest filed by defeated Northern Islands mayoral candidate Vicente Cruz Santos Jr.

On Tuesday afternoon, Govendo orally dismissed Santos' lawsuit for lack of jurisdiction after hearing Northern Islands mayor-elect Fran-

See GOVENDO on Page 4

INSIDE

LOCAL
The Northern Mariana College Nursing Club turns its attention to the environment.
» PAGE 9

BUSINESS
The Energy Department predicts gas to average $2.60 next year.
» PAGE 16

ASIA
The death toll from a bomb explosion on a bus in the Philippines rises to 10.
» PAGE 18

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Local

Benavente wants 3 federal prosecutors disqualified

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Richard S. Benavente, a former firefighter who pleaded guilty to a count of exploitation of a child, has asked the federal court to disqualify three prosecutors from handling his separate perjury case.

Benavente, through counsel Michael W. Dotts, said that assistant U.S. attorneys Rami Badawy, Garth Backe, and Ross Naughton are percipient witnesses to a critical event in the case.

Dotts said all three could be called to testify and so none of the three should prosecute the case.

Dotts said Badawy has left the Saipan office of the U.S. Attorney's Office and is not expected to be a trial counsel, but he is included in this motion for completeness.

Even if Badawy, Backe and Naughton do not testify, Dotts said there is a danger in their presenting the case and that danger is vouching.

Dotts said Badawy, Backe and Naughton were actual witnesses as they were present at what the United States has described as "a critical event in this case."

Dotts said because they are individually intertwined in the events of this case, they simply cannot present the case to a jury without implicitly testifying or vouching.

The defense counsel said different trial counsels are required to present the case against Benavente.

Last February, the defendant pleaded guilty to one count of sexual exploitation of a child.

The charge that Benavente pleaded guilty to was the June 23, 2013, incident in which he "persuaded, induced, enticed, and coerced" an underage girl to engage in sexually explicit conduct that he videotaped using a cellular phone.

Benavente is still under the custody.

Last September, Benavente and Randy A. Igisomar, were indicted in federal court for allegedly making false statements or changing their stories during Raymond Roberto's trial.

The indictment charged Benavente with three counts of perjury, and one count of obstruction of justice. It also includes a criminal forfeiture allegation. He pleaded not guilty.

ABSENTEE VOTES FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Commonwealth Election Commission officials and staff examine the absentee ballots before counting them at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on Friday night. The CEC board certified the Nov. 21 runoff results, declaring the tandem of Gov. Eloy S. Inos-Ralph DLG Torres as winner over independent team of Heinz Hofschneider-Ray N. Yumul.

CPUC says lawmakers can't pass bills to regulate CUC

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission will be asking to meet with members of the Legislature to impress upon them that they should not pass laws regulating CUC since that is the regulatory body's purview.

In an interview yesterday after their special meeting in Oleai, CPUC chair Joe Guerrero pointed out that Public Law 15-35, which created the CPUC in 2006, gives the commission the power to regulate electric, water, wastewater, telecommunications, and cable television companies in the CNMI.

Before that, the Legislature and the Executive branch played a role in influencing policy governing CUC and telecommunications companies in the CNMI, Guerrero said.

"But since the commission was established and made the regulatory body for CUC and telecom, the Legislature should not be passing laws to regulate CUC and their activities as that really should be the oversight of CPUC," he said.

Guerrero said that in their experience from about two years ago, many public officials don't really understand the function of CPUC and how it regulates utilities.

"We're hoping that through the discussion with the Legislature and anyone else, they will learn more about the CPUC, understand how it works, and participate in our meetings as well," Guerrero said.

He noted that the only way the Legislature can change these laws and regulate CUC is to come up with new legislation that removes CPUC's oversight over CUC and telecom firms.

"That is the purview of the Legislature and it all depends on the changes. If the change is good, the public can then welcome it, but if the change is to remove the oversight powers from CPUC, then it really reduces the effectiveness of CPUC," Guerrero said.

Earlier this year, Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, who chairs the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications, planned to introduce a bill that will exclude CUC from the oversight of the CPUC.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos then gave word that he would veto any bill that would exclude or remove the authority of CPUC over CUC.

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM

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Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Printing funded by the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Grant under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration.

Drunk ex-convict allegedly punches poker customer

An intoxicated man allegedly bothered and punched a male customer who refused to give him $5 at a poker arcade along Beach Road near Quartermaster on Sunday midnight.

Jesse Joseph Saralu, 35, left the establishment aboard a Mazda 3 car after the incident but police later arrested him at XO Poker.

The victim, Joshua V. Muña, sustained a cut underneath his left eye. Medics responded and treated him, police said.

At a hearing on Tuesday, Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio set a $5,000 cash bail and appointed the Office of the Public Defender as counsel for Saralu.

Preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 18 at 9am.

Police detective Francisco Romeo O. Iginoef stated in his report that two police officers responded to Star Poker near Quartermaster on Sunday at 12:13am in response to a report of a disturbance.

When the officers arrived at Star Poker, they met the injured Muña, who told them that Saralu punched him and then left the place.

A police officer arrested Saralu at the XO Poker at 1:20am that same day.

Iginoef said that, according to Muña, he and his girlfriend were on their way home and had stopped by Star Poker as his girlfriend needed to use the restroom. As his girlfriend was using the restroom, Muña said he tried to play poker with his $5.

Saralu then came, asked Muna to give him $5 and asked him who the girl with him was. Saralu told Muña to give his girlfriend to him while he was playing poker.

As the two argued, Muña told Saralu to move away because he was disturbing him. Saralu, who smelled of alcohol, put his face between the machine monitor. As the two argued, the girlfriend came out of the restroom and asked what was happening.

Saralu then allegedly punched Muna in the left eye. He allegedly tried to punch Muña again but missed.

Saralu then got into his car and left.

The defendant has prior convictions for theft, assault and battery, and other offenses, police said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Man allegedly points gun at son-in-law

A 53-year-old man who was looking for his wife and had threatened to kill her allegedly pointed a handgun at his son-in-law, whom he suspected of hiding her at his house on Saipan.

Luis Aguon Reyes was arrested Tuesday night for assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and disturbing the peace. His bail was set yesterday at $50,000 cash.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman also imposed many conditions on Reyes, including requiring him to surrender any handguns.

Preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 17 at 9am.

Police detective Jeffrey I. Norita stated in his report that Reyes' daughter called police on Monday at 11:07pm to report a gun-pointing incident involving her father.

Norita said that Reyes and his son had gone to the house of the victim, who is the husband of Reyes' daughter, to ask him for the whereabouts of his wife. The son-in-law told Reyes not to involve his family with their problems and asked him to leave.

Later that night, Reyes appeared at his son-in-law's house and shouted at him, telling him to stop lying because his (Reyes') wife is hiding inside the house.

As they were sitting on a picnic table, Reyes allegedly pulled a handgun from his pants and allegedly pointed it at his son-in-law, asking him if he's sure he was not playing with him.

The victim said when he saw the gun he got scared for his wife and children's safety.

Reyes' daughter came out and told the defendant to leave the house.

The daughter told police that his father was shouting that he was going to kill them all. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

9 named to transition panel

Newly designated Committee on Transition chair Gregorio M. Camacho has appointed a nine-person Transition Executive Committee to oversee the transition to the incoming administration of incumbent and governor-elect Eloy S. Inos and lieutenant governor-elect and Senate President Ralph DLG. Torres (R-Saipan).

Named to the panel are NMI Republican Party president James Ada as vice chairman and members Rufin S. Inos, Edward C. Deleon Guerrero, Esther S. Fleming, Mathilda A. Rosario, representative-elect Angel A. Demapan, and Torres brothers Vince, Victorino, and Joaquin.

The Dec. 10, 2014, letter was addressed to all CNMI government department and activity heads, boards, and commissions.

In related news, Inos has appointed Ivan Blanco as acting public information officer in lieu of Demapan who won a seat in the 19th House of Representatives.

Blanco, who already served in the same capacity while Demapan was campaigning during the last general election, also served as the GOP media & public relations chair in Inos' successful run in the 2014 gubernatorial runoff.

"I'm confident that Ivan will do very well as acting press secretary as he demonstrated previously during the period that representative-elect Angel Demapan was on leave pursuant to the election law. Now, as representative-elect Demapan is both transitioning out for his new role at the Legislature and as member of my transition executive committee, I'm sure he will again serve in this acting capacity to the best of his ability," said Inos. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Resolution to alleviate flooding at CK intersection introduced

A House resolution requesting the Department of Public Lands to facilitate the land compensation or land exchange for the taking of private property in Chalan Kanoa was introduced yesterday by House floor leader Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan).

House Resolution 18-68 stated that Lot No. 2, Block No. 25 of Chalan Kanoa has been a "nesting ground" for runoff water from higher grounds in the village.

Due to the hazards and problems flooding has posed in the area, the bill proposes that a drainage or ponding location to catch runoff water be built in the area.

Demapan said the flooding has proven especially troublesome to motorists in the intersection in front of LN Market, where floodwaters normally reach more than ankle-deep.

HR 18-68 stated that the land owners are willing to give up the property for the building of a ponding basin to "enhance the area for residents and visitors of Chalan Kanoa and the development of such water catchment will also benefit the many businesses in the area, the William S. Reyes Elementary School and the beaches in Chalan Kanoa as the water catchment will prevent water runoff from flowing into the waters." ***(Mark Rabago)***

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PSS gives 'good progression' in audit reports

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System's comptroller, George Palican, reported "good progression" in his updates on audit matters to the CNMI State Board of Education yesterday.

He said most findings from 2011 have been resolved but there are a few remaining that PSS is still working on. A 2011 independent audit identified major deficiencies that mostly cover contract awards, disbursements, and travels incurred in fiscal year 2011.

The U.S. Department of Education has in the past stipulated special conditions for grant awards received by PSS from the department.

In 2013, the USDE stipulated additional special conditions to their grants based on the outcome of an onsite visit conducted by the department's Risk Management Service in August 2012, the delay by PSS in filing the fiscal year 2011 single audit, and findings included in their March 18, 2013 audit report.

The fiscal year 2011 single audit reported deficiencies in bank reconciliation concerning federal funds; procurement; allowable use of department funds; property management (including inventory); travel policies; and payroll procedures; as well as prior areas of concern regarding monitoring and evaluating department programs, and tracking of property and equipment purchased with department funds.

In an interview, Palican said there have been "less findings" in these areas in subsequent years. Right now, PSS has continued to submit quarterly reports on findings from 2011.

He told the board "most of them have been resolved" and only a "few are remaining."

He told *Saipan Tribune* that his work has been "intensive."

Different agencies review PSS' audit and ask for clarification, and PSS provide this clarification, he said.

In an update on the audit for fiscal year 2012, he reported some "cases closed."

He reported to the board that the Administration of Children and Families has accepted PSS corrective action plan, and that Federal Transit Agency has "closed-out" on an FY 2012 audit finding based on PSS responses.

Documents have also been submitted to the inspector of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding their FY 2013 audit. PSS is now waiting for news of their accepted corrective actions, according to Palican.

GOVENDO

From Page 1

cisco Jerome K. Aldan's and the Commonwealth Election Commission's separate motions to dismiss the case.

Aldan of the Republican won over independent Santos with a margin of 33 votes, 94-61, during the Nov. 4 general elections.

Santos, through counsel Janet H. King, sued Aldan and CEC, alleging that Aldan is not a resident of the Northern Islands and that there were 40 illegal votes.

In his 15-page written decision yesterday, Govendo ruled that CEC is a properly named defendant in this case.

Govendo said it is clear that CEC is a necessary party in election contest cases, particularly where—as in Santos' case—its actions are being challenged.

On timeliness of the claim against Aldan, the judge noted that Santos filed his complaint on Nov. 19, 2014, claiming that Aldan does not meet the residency and domiciliary requirements necessary to serve as Northern Islands mayor.

Govendo said Santos did not provide any facts to establish when he became aware of Aldan's alleged ineligibility.

The court did hear Santos' testimony at a hearing on Tuesday, where he said he first became aware that Aldan intended to run for NI mayor some time in 2011. He also became aware that Aldan filed for resident status in NI in 2011.

Santos also disclosed that he saw Aldan in Pagan on May 29, 2014, and that he knew for certain at that time that Aldan would run for mayor.

Santos admitted that he doubted Aldan's qualifications at that time.

Govendo said Santos, however, never challenged Aldan's candidacy—neither with CEC nor with the court.

Santos contends that the Commonwealth election law does not provide any guidelines for contesting candidates.

Govendo agrees that details for these types of challenges are noticeably absent. However, the judge said, the law does provide that these type of challenges may be made.

In the footnote of his order, Govendo urged the Legislature to amend the Commonwealth election law to provide clear guidance on the procedures for challenging candidates.

"This court believes that a candidacy challenge should rightfully be filed before the election to avoid the necessary expenditure of time and funds and the uncertainty that comes with post-election challenges," he said.

Nevertheless, Govendo said, the Commonwealth election law is clear on the timing of election contests.

He said a voter contesting an election must file a written, verified complaint with the Superior Court and have it served "within seven days after the discovery of the fact supporting the contest, except that no complaint may be filed over 15 days after the declaration of the official results."

Govendo said the Commonwealth election law's time clock began on Nov. 7, 2014, the day when CEC certified the election results.

Govendo agrees with Santos that the statute does not require the statutory clock to start running once election results are announced, and that the time may begin to run on some day after election results are announced.

However, the judge said, in this instance Santos believed well in advance of the election that Aldan was an unqualified candidate.

Govendo said Santos did not learn new facts after the election that provided him with grounds for a different challenge.

"Thus, one the election results were certified, plaintiff was aware that he had lost the election to a candidate he believed to be ineligible," he said.

Accordingly, the judge pointed out, Santos' seven-day window in which to file a complaint began on Nov. 7, 2014.

Under the statute, Govendo said, Santos had seven days—or until Nov. 14, 2014—to file this complaint.

Yet, Govendo said, Santos did not file the complaint until Nov. 19, 2014, five days after the statutory period expired.

"Accordingly, the challenge made against defendant Aldan was untimely filed, and this court lacks jurisdiction to preside over this issue," he said.

On the timeliness of voter challenges, Govendo said he must determine whether Santos has the right to challenge voter eligibility post-election, and must determine if the challenge was timely filed.

Govendo said Santos was aware of the relevant facts related to the denial of his voter eligibility challenge well in advance of Nov. 12, 2014.

Govendo said Santos made various factual allegations about these voters' eligibility in the challenge he submitted to CEC and could easily have made those same allegations to the court had he filed an appeal of CEC's decision in accordance with the procedure.

Govendo said Santos did not appeal.

The judge said plaintiff had all the facts necessary to make his claim more than seven days prior to filing the complaint.

Govendo said Santos had this information regarding the voters as early as Sept. 11, 2014, when he made his initial voter eligibility challenge.

"Thus, similar to his challenge against defendant Aldan, the time within which to file this challenge with the court began on Nov. 7, 2014, when CEC certified the election results," he said.

However, Govendo said, because Santos failed to exhaust his administrative remedies, any vote challenge filed after Nov. 4, 2014, would have been untimely.

Govendo said justice requires the court to deny Santos to file an amended complaint.

"Election contests are under strict time limitations in order to prevent uncertainty in the election process," he added.

HR 83

From Page 1

be placed on calendar in the coming days.

"The House Majority Leader indicated on Dec. 9, 2014, that this bill may be considered in the week ahead," read the information from the website.

The House Majority Leader is Kevin McCarthy (R-CA).

Aside from the provision extending the E-2C program in the Commonwealth for another five years, H.R. 83 would also extend policies that would also otherwise expire on Dec. 31, 2014.

These are a bar on applications for asylum in the Northern Mariana Islands and the exemption for Guam and the Northern Marianas from the national numerical cap on H visas.

E-2C visa holders are investors that have been grandfathered from the Commonwealth's immigration laws.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said he continues to work overtime to have H.R. 83 passed before the lame duck 113th U.S. Congress concludes.

"We continue to work on passage of H.R. 83 and very much appreciate the partnership of Gov. [Eloy S.] Inos in working toward this goal," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Sablan is the co-sponsor of the bill that was authored by U.S. Virgin Islands Delegate Donna Christensen (D). It was introduced on Jan. 3, 2013, passed the House on Sept. 15, 2014, before being passed by the Senate to include CNMI provisions on Sept. 18, 2014.

Inos wrote New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie last Dec. 2 to ask for the Republican Governors Association chairman's help in urging U.S. House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) to put H.R. 83 in calendar before the end of the year.

The governor told Christie that H.R. 83 is time-critical as well as non-controversial since they're already been in place for five years, "so there would be no change in existing policy," adding that one of the policies applies both to Guam and the CNMI (H visa cap), while the other two apply solely to the Commonwealth.

Earlier in the month, the CNMI House of Representatives passed a resolution urging Congress to grant a five-year extension to the CNMI-only investor visa. HR 18-66 said the E-2C investors are one of the linchpins of the island economy, especially at a time when the tourism industry is about to rebound.

A total of 261 E-2C investors remain in the Commonwealth.

SENATE

From Page 1

what was one of the spy agency's greatest successes.

Then-CIA Director Leon Panetta repeated that assertion in public, and it found its way into a critically acclaimed movie about the operation, "Zero Dark Thirty," which depicts a detainee offering up the identity of bin Laden's courier, Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti, after being tortured at a secret CIA interrogation site. As it turned out, bin Laden was living in al-Kuwaiti's walled family compound, so tracking the courier was the key to finding the al-Qaida leader.

But the CIA's story, like the Hollywood one, is just not true, the Senate report on CIA interrogations concludes in a 14,000-word section of the report's public summary.

"A review of CIA records found that the initial intelligence obtained, as well as the information the CIA identified as the most critical or the most valuable on Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti, was not related to the use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques," the Senate investigation found.

CIA officials disagree, and maintain that detainees subjected to coercive tactics provided crucial details.

"It is impossible to know in hindsight whether we could have obtained ... the same information that helped us find bin Laden without using enhanced techniques," the agency said in its written response.

The Senate report, released Tuesday, attempts to methodically debunk the CIA's case. Investigators found that the CIA repeatedly mischaracterized to congressional oversight committees what information about al-Kuwaiti and bin Laden came from detainees after they were brutally interrogated, and that in many cases, they discussed the courier before being subjected to rough treatment.

The report also points out that the CIA didn't receive any information from CIA detainees on al-Kuwaiti until 2003. Yet by the end of 2002, the CIA had gathered significant information about al-Kuwaiti and his close links to bin Laden, including:

■ His phone number: In March 2002, his phone number was in al-Qaida detainee Abu Zubaydah's address book under the heading "Abu Ahmad K." In June 2002, a person using the identified phone number and believed at the time to be "al-Kuwaiti" called a number associated with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed 9/11 mastermind.

■ His email address: In September 2002, the CIA received reporting on al-Kuwaiti's email address from a detainee in foreign custody. When Mohammed was captured in March 2003, an email address associated with al-Kuwaiti was found on his laptop.

■ His age, physical description and family information.

■ His association with bin Laden: In April 2002, the CIA linked al-Kuwaiti to a phone number associated with one of bin Laden's sons. And on June 25, 2002, the CIA received reporting from another detainee in the custody of a foreign government, known as Riyadh the Facilitator, that al-Kuwaiti may have served as a bin Laden courier.

In its response, the CIA said the intelligence "was insufficient to distinguish al-Kuwaiti from many other bin Laden associates until additional information from detainees put it into context and allowed CIA to better understand his true role and potential in the hunt for bin Laden. As such, the information CIA obtained from these detainees did play a role—in combination with other streams of intelligence—in finding the al-Qaida leader."

The CIA also said that two detainees, Ammar al-Baluchi and Hassan Ghul, provided crucial information. Al-Baluchi, after undergoing enhanced interrogation techniques, "was the first detainee to reveal what apparently was a carefully guarded al-Qaida secret—that Abu Ahmad served as a courier for messages to and from bin Laden," the CIA said.

Ghul, after brutal interrogations, stated that Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti passed a letter from bin Laden to another operative in late 2003, the CIA said.

Senate investigators counter that al-Baluchi recanted information he gave after underdoing harsh interrogations, then went back and forth about whether al-Kuwaiti was a bin Laden courier.

As for Ghul, he offered "the most detailed and accurate intelligence collected from a CIA detainee" on al-Kuwaiti's links to bin Laden before the agency began using harsh techniques against him, investigators found.

Before he was roughed up, the report says, Ghul speculated to a CIA interrogator that bin Laden "likely has maintained a small security signature of circa one or two persons," and that "Abu Ahmed likely handled all of UBL's needs, including moving messages out."

House passes measure that creates new fire, EMS department

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

By a unanimous vote of 20-0, the House of Representatives passed a bill yesterday that would create the new Department of Fire and Medical Services within the Executive Branch of the CNMI government.

Senate Bill 18-057, SD 2 now goes to the desk of Gov. Eloy S. Inos. If he signs it or doesn't act on it for 40 days, the bill becomes law and the Commonwealth will have 13 principal departments instead of the current 12.

Before the House voted on the bill, House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero reminded members that since they are in the lame duck days of the 18th Legislature, bills like S.B. 18-057 that require appropriation or restructuring needs a three-fourths vote. In the case of the 20-member House, 15 votes were needed for the bill to pass.

The Department of Public Safety currently oversees the Fire and EMS divisions.

Acting Fire chief Juan Pua said a bill finally passing the Legislature affecting the separation of the Fire Division from DPS has been a long time coming.

"We brought our family members and the community, especially our firefighters. I didn't think this bill will ever go through. I've been in the Fire service for 25 years and finally [it passed]. We just want to say that hopefully the governor will support the bill and let it pass. From our community and our family members we want to say thank you very much for their [House and Senate's] support for the bill's passage," said Pua.

The acting fire chief believes that if the governor does sign the bill into law, Fire and EMS' relationship with DPS will not be affected.

"Our relationship is still there. We're still going to work together. But now we can focus on our specific mission but we're still going to work with law enforcement."

Deleon Guerrero

The bill stated that out of the $8 million earmarked for DPS, an estimated $2.7 million is allocated to the Fire Division.

Rep. Christopher Leon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations and whose panel reviewed the bill, said while there's no cost analysis conducted he believes that the only extra cost to the CNMI will be if the new department decides to have their own set of commissioner, deputy commissioner, and other officials.

He urged House members to support the bill because the CNMI's Fire Division is the only remaining fire division in the U.S. under the wing of a public safety department.

"It's the only one merged with another department. We should segregate the police operations from the fire department," said Leon Guerrero.

With $7 million in potential ambulance revenues to be collected, the would-be Department of Fire and Medical Services could fund some of its operations, he said. "In the event this law is enacted, they will be collecting more revenues to operate."

Rep. Teresita Santos (R-Rota) was initially hesitant to support the measure without any testimony or report from Rota's own fire division.

"But today I finally got written support from firefighters from the First Senatorial District. I also took into consideration public comments made today," she said in her decision to vote on S.B. 18-057.

A virtual army of firefighters and EMS personnel went up to Capital Hill yesterday morning to make known their support for the bill.

When Deleon Guerrero finally announced the 20-0 vote in favor of S.B. 18-057's bill, the chamber reverberated from the applause of some 30 Fire and EMS personnel that attended the session.

Several Fire Division and EMS personnel also gave public comments yesterday, among them EMS coordinator Ton Kapileo, Fire public information officer Jairam Jayendar, EMS PIO Jocelyn Sablan, firefighter/paramedic J. Hokin as well as former DPS commissioner Charles Ingram and former teacher representative Ambrose Bennett.

Also submitted was a signature drive in support of the measure with over 900 names on it. The Fire and EMS divisions currently have 96 personnel on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

The Senate passed S.B. 18-057 last Aug. 21. Before the House passed it yesterday, there were also three other failed attempts to have similar bills passed before the Legislature.

PSS to push for fairer share of Title 1 grant

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System will renew its effort to get U.S. territories a fairer share of its current Title 1 allocation next year, according to Tim Thornburg, PSS federal programs officer.

Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and America Samoa currently receive a third of 1 percent of Title 1 monies given to them and the Bureau of Indian Education under the current language of the Elementary Secondary Education Act.

This despite the fact, according to Thornburg, that the number of students aged 5 to 17 in the outlying areas is equal to the number of students in the same age range under the Bureau of Indian Education.

As a result of this, the bureau has the highest student allocation in the nation, with over $20,000 a year per student, according to Thornburg.

"We're not interested in how much is being allocated. What we're interested in is equity," he told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday.

PSS would like outlying areas to receive one-half of the 1 percent, according to Thornburg. He said PSS plans to work with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan to get this done.

This 50-50 split, he said, "just makes sense," and would follow how Title IV—the Rural and Low Income Schools grant—is split equally between BIE and the outlying areas.

The change in law would bring the CNMI's total consolidated grant from $12 million to $16 million, according to Thornburg,

The change would also be consistent with one of the five goals the Board of Education drafted for Sablan in their 2010 congressional agenda, some of which require inclusion in nationwide programs, he said.

He believes that reauthorization in a Republican-led Congress is a "real possibility." He gathered this from a recent Council of Chief Sate School Officers annual policy forum he attended with Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan last month.

He learned that Congress would push for a reauthorization of ESEA, or the No Child Left Behind Act, with the removal of competitive grants, like the Race to the Top program, which PSS has tried but failed to access in past years.

He learned that Republicans intend to replace competitive grants with formula grants, much like the original ESEA drawn in 1964. This, Thornburg believes, might mean more money for the CNMI.

The outlying areas have never been included in eligibility, he said, and thus could never apply for these grants.

"It just never happened," he said.

An NPR report in November had Lamar Alexander, the expected new chairman for the U.S. Senate committee Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, saying that fixing NCLBA was his "first priority" in the new Congress.

Patty Murray, minority leader on HELP, also has an interest in authorization, according to Thornburg. He said the two leaders worked together recently on a bipartisan bill reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act.

Because of this, Thornburg is hopeful that a bipartisan bill on education reauthorization will emerge from the Senate next year.

TakeCare donates to anti-domestic violence groups

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Guma' Esparanasa staff receive $3,000 in cash donation from Takecare Foundation to help with their programs and community outreaches.

Takecare Foundation donates $5,000 to the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. JAYSON CAMACHO

TakeCare Foundation donated a total of $8,000 to two organizations that advocate against domestic violence during a turnover ceremony at the FHP Health Center at the TSL Plaza in Garapan last Friday.

Guma Esparansa received $3,000 in cash donation while the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence received $5,000 in cash.

Guma' Esperansa, a program of Karidat Social Services, is a shelter for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and human trafficking in the CNMI. The non-profit organization works daily to provide care and services to victims of violence and their children who have fled their homes to seek safe shelter.

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote, nourish and sustain a collective movement to end violence in the CNMI.

TakeCare operations manager Nora Sablan said they donated to both organizations because it is for a worthy cause.

"We try our best to return back to the community," she said.

The TakeCare Foundation is composed of employees of TakeCare Insurance and the FHP Health Center who are devoted to charitable and educational causes that enhance the health, wellness and welfare of individuals, families and the public at large. It is unique because it is employee-driven. TakeCare and FHP employees play a major role in assisting with the contributions and the selection process of the grant recipients.

Sablan said this was the first time for the foundation to donate to the coalitioin while it is Guma Esperansa's second time.

Coalition program coordinator Kiki Igitol said they are really grateful for the donation they received.

"This will help support our community outreach events and we are really grateful for that," Igitol said.

The TakeCare Foundation hopes the donation will help the two organizations in their outreach initiatives to provide care and services to victims of violence and their children.

Korean students here for exchange program

Thirty-five students and two teachers from a middle school in South Korea are on Saipan and are interacting with students at Chacha Oceanview Junior High School.

In an interview at the Saipan Mayor's Office, student exchange program coordinator Gang Nung Lee said the students are currently studying English at Chacha Oceanview.

"They are taking English classes. They came here to Saipan on Dec. 8 and will be leaving on Dec. 13," Lee said.

Lee noted that their school's students also visited last year under the same program.

"They have developed a sisterhood relationship with CO-JHS and the reason they're here is that it will help encourage English, because English now in Korea is a very important language to learn," Lee said.

The students' ages range from 14 to 16 years old.

The group will be heading to the Thursday Street Market tonight and will visit the Saipan Mayor's Office and the *Man'amko* Center tomorrow, Friday. ***(Jayson Camacho)***

Child sex trafficker gets 17-year sentence

Alicia A.G. Limtiaco, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, announced that Annette Nakatsukasa Basa, was sentenced Friday in the U.S. District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands by Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, for sex trafficking of children. Basa received a sentence of 17.5 years incarceration with credit for time served, five years supervised release upon release from prison, 500 hours of community service, $100 special assessment fee and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of $9,102.39. She was further ordered to undergo a mental health assessment and receive any corresponding treatment that may be appropriate while in the Bureau of Prisons custody. Basa is not to unlawfully use controlled substances or alcohol. Basa will also have to register as a sex offender under the SORNA program.

Basa pleaded guilty on Feb. 20, 2014, to one count of sex trafficking of children, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1591(a)(1). Basa took in minor runaways, allowed them to live with her, gave them methamphetamine and then demanded they perform sexual acts for money.

Limtiaco stated: "The sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable individuals is an affront to fundamental human rights and will not be tolerated. The defendant preyed on these young victims, manipulating and sexually exploiting them. [Friday's] sentence sends the critical message that human trafficking is a crime that violates the very core and dignity of a human being and traffickers face severe punishment. The Department of Justice and U.S. Attorney's Office remain committed to vigorously prosecuting and holding accountable those who perpetrate these heinous crimes."

Limtiaco additionally reminds defendants who have committed sexual abuse of children, that under federal and local law, all sex offenders have a duty to register and keep their registration current with the Sex Offender Registry in their jurisdiction. Sex offenders who travel to the CNMI and who reside in the CNMI must inform the CNMI DPS Sex Offender Registry where they reside, work, or attend school—they must also periodically update their registration information. The U.S. Attorney notes that the sex offender registry was created in order to protect the public by protecting victims, preventing further victimization and informing the public of the whereabouts of sex offenders. CNMI's Sex Offender Registry can be found online at http://cnmi.nsopw.gov/.

This prosecution is part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood Initiative, a nationwide commitment to aggressively prosecute defendants who engage in the sexual victimization of children and adults, possess or receive child pornography, and sex offenders who fail to register with the jurisdiction's Sex Offender Registry. The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations. The case was handled by assistant U.S. attorneys Rami Badawy and Ross Naughton. ***(USAO)***

Second suspect in robbing taxi driver falls

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Police arrested Monday night the second suspect who allegedly beat up a taxi driver and robbed him, causing him to crash his car in a jungle area near the intersection of Katbon Road in San Vicente.

Daimeionne Kaleo Greer, 18, was arrested for robbery, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio set a $15,000 cash bail. Preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 14 at 9am.

Police detective Andrew S. Taimanao stated in his report that Greer's arrest was prompted after the mother of the first suspect, Kid Kyle Osiik Omengkar, disclosed to a Division of Youth Services' staff that Omengkar had nothing to do with the robbery.

The mother revealed that Omengkar was only covering for his juvenile brother, who was with Greer, also known as Damian, during the robbery.

When Police Officer Travis Hurst stopped Omengkar and Greer near the scene, the latter ran away. Hurst was injured when he fell to the ground during the chase.

According to court documents, Omengkar's brother already confessed that he was with Greer at the time. The juvenile was also arrested.

It is not clear if the government will dismiss Omengkar's charges following the arrest of Greer and the juvenile.

The victim, Chengzhe Piao, suffered a laceration on the right side of his face. He was robbed of $80 to $100 cash, police said.

Police detective Taimanao stated in his report that Hurst responded to an auto crash along Isa Drive in San Vicente on Nov. 30 at 10:21pm.

Piao, who met with Hurst on the side of the road, told Hurst he had picked up two customers at Nang Ocha Store in San Vicente at 10pm and they told him to drop them off at a hotel in Garapan.

As Piao was driving down from Nang Ocha Store toward the intersection of Katbon Road and Isa Drive, the two men started punching him, causing the car to crash on the other side of the roadway.

After the crash, the suspects took about $80 to $100 from the car's sun visor and fled on foot. Piao then called the police.

While Hurst was waiting for a tow truck to pull the victim's car from the jungle, he saw two men walking north along the sidewalk on the opposite side of the road.

Piao identified the two men as the persons who beat him up and robbed him.

Hurst secured one, who was later identified as Omengkar, but the second suspect ran off. Omengkar identified the suspect as a certain Damian. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS DENNIS B. CHAN

Members of Saipan Southern High School's Junior Achievement program have their picture taken after the introduction of the club's product company called "Pacific Bauble." The club, which teaches the practical experience of running a business, sold phone charms at the Street Market yesterday. According to adviser Jonathan Aguon, the club recently settled on phone charms as their competitive product for next year's JA competition against Kagman High School.

NMC and Framingham launch 11th cohort program

Framingham State University and Northern Marianas College have joined forces again to train a new cohort of students who will be working toward their master's degree in education.

The graduate program, which culminates in a degree conferred by the Framingham State University, presents a unique opportunity for students living and working in the CNMI to advance both academically and professionally.

Many of the graduates of the cohort program are now employed by the CNMI Public School System as teachers, principals, and administrators.

The classes for the program are scheduled in a way that recognizes that many of the students hold full time jobs and are balancing many obligations. As such, the courses are provided in a condensed but convenient format supported by prior readings, and culminate in a final project. The instructional content of the classes are delivered through both online formats as well an in-class sessions, which are led by Framingham professors who travel to the CNMI to meet personally with the cohort participants.

Since the start of the collaborative effort between the college and Framingham State University, 255 individuals (employed by the CNMI Public School System, Northern Marianas College, private schools and other organizations) have completed the program. The graduation of the current cohort of students will raise the number of graduates obtaining a master's degree from Framingham State University past 200.

The Northern Marianas College offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), associate degrees in business, business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

Individuals interested in joining the next cohort should contact Floyd Masga at the Northern Marianas College Community Development Institute at 234-5498 Ext. 6808/6802 or email floyd.masga@marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Asan Bay Overlook Memorial Wall re-opens

Construction at War in the Pacific National Historical Park to rehabilitate the Asan Bay Overlook Memorial Wall has been completed, and the site opened to the public on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014. Construction included replacement of over 100 panels with 17,771 names etched into black granite. The names are of those who died or suffered during the occupation and Liberation of Guam.

According to Superintendent Jim Richardson, "We thank the public for their patience as construction continued. We now welcome Guam residents and visitors to view the Memorial Wall and commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those affected by World War II on Guam."

Asan Bay Overlook, at the top of Route 6, Nimitz Hill, is open daily from 8am to 5pm.

An official rededication of the Memorial Wall is planned for early next year, with a date to be announced in the near future.

The renovation has corrected misspellings and added additional names to the wall, including names of persons who were killed during the 1941 and 1944 campaigns as well as the people of Guam who suffered or were killed under Japanese occupation. The park used the official list of names of the people of Guam kept by the office of Delegate Madeleine Bordallo, which was compiled by the congresswoman's and governor's offices. In addition, the wall now includes the names of American servicemen who died defending the island between December 1941 and October 1942.

In addition to the new panels, park staff and volunteers have refurbished several bronze reliefs at the site, each depicting a touching scene of the war experience on Guam. We extend our sincere appreciation to all who helped, including the Junior Rangers, special stewards of the park.

For more information about the Asan Bay Overlook Memorial Wall, visit http://www.nps.gov/wapa/planyourvisit/asan-bay-overlook.htm or call 333-4051. ***(NPS)***

Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Board of Directors
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council's mission is to "foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth."

The Council's board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our CNMI community. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities and to actively participate in fundraising activities. Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually;
- Raising funds for Council programs;
- Recruiting community partners;
- Promoting awareness about the Council's mission and its programs in the community;
- Attending Council programs and activities;
- Participating in working committee meetings;
- Evaluating Council programs and activities;
- Reviewing grant applications;
- Providing input about the humanities from various community members, and
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings on behalf of the Council.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to Robert H. Hunter, Chair, Northern Marianas Humanities Council at Post Office Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950 or delivered to the Council's office located in the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan. All letters of interest and resumes must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 2, 2015. For additional information, please contact the Council's Executive Director, Scott Russell, at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.northernmarianashumanities.org.

Accountants group gives $1M to University of Guam

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—The University of Guam Endowment Foundation on Tuesday received a $1 million endowment from the Guam Board of Accountancy, which will be used to bring guest lecturers to the university.

The lecturers will be experts in finance and accounting. UOG president Robert Underwood said this is the first endowed chair for the university, but he hopes other departments such as history or education will be able to also have an endowed chair.

GBOA executive director Dave Sanford said the endowment comes from a surplus the board has accumulated over several years.

When certified public accountant exams are given on Guam, a portion of the exam fee is used to fund the board, Sanford said.

Throughout the past few years, the board has been able to operate on less money than has been collected, he said.

"We are contributing the surplus to the endowment foundation. We are trying to improve the UOG accounting program," Sanford said.

Public Law 32-191, which was signed into law in October, appropriates $1 million from accountancy board to UOG's Endowment Foundation, which will be used to enhance the School of Business Accountancy Degree Program, UOG Endowment Foundation Executive Director Mark Mendiola said.

The program will allow the university to bring in high-quality talent from around the globe that the university otherwise might not be able to afford, Underwood said.

The late Sen. Ben Pangelinan introduced legislation in April to create the fund.

The Herminia Dierking and John Phillips Visiting Accounting Professor and Lecturer Program, funded and created through the endowment, is named after two professors "instrumental in keeping the accounting program going throughout the years," Mendiola said.

UOG's Endowment Foundation, GBOA, the university and other accounting professionals from the Guam community will manage the Guam Accountancy Endowment Fund, Mendiola said. It will provide the university money for the lecturer program as needed.

Sanford said the accountancy board hopes to be able to bring professors to Guam on a semester-by-semester basis because it will bring "cutting-edge skills to UOG."

American Samoa gets approval to develop universal Medicaid

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (The Samoa News/PIR)—After a request made by Gov. Lolo M. Moliga to Cindy Mann, Deputy Administrator of CMS/ Director of Medicaid and CHIP, she has given her support and verbal approval to allow the American Samoa Medicaid State Agency to develop a universal health care coverage plan under the Medicaid program.

Medicaid Director Sandra King Young delivered the request on behalf of the governor in a meeting with the Deputy Administrator of CMS on Nov. 5, 2014.

She explained, "Governor Lolo had pursued and exhausted numerous options for health insurance and off-island coverage since he came into his administration. He began with requesting to join the Hawai'i Health Connector, negotiating provider agreements directly with Hawai'i hospitals and trying to attract third party health insurance providers, all to no avail.

According to Young, "Due to American Samoa's past history of poor payments to hospital providers and vendors off island, providers do not want to sign provider agreements without ASG putting up at least $10 million in an escrow account to prepay for off-island referrals.

"Due to low volume, remoteness, inadequate local medical facilities, transportation and a high-risk population, health insurance providers are not interested and determine that it's not cost effective for them to provide health insurance coverage for the residents of American Samoa," she said, adding that "in spite of all the government's efforts, American Samoans remain an uninsured population desperately lacking access to quality health care services as mandated under the Affordable Care Act ('ACA')."

The local Medicaid Director said, "Governor Lolo made the decision to propose a federal solution in partnership with our local government."

Young noted, "This preliminary approval from CMS will allow our government to pursue changes to the Medicaid program to basically provide coverage for all our legal residents. The Medicaid office is currently drafting new language to the Medicaid State Plan to submit for official approval to CMS."

The Medicaid Director anticipates that this process will take at least 12 to 18 months to review and receive official approval. In the meantime, there is much work that must be done to align local laws in order for the Medicaid office to implement universal health care coverage for legal residents.

She said, "In order for this universal coverage to go into effect, local laws must be amended to allow for the financial contributions to the Medicaid insurance plan to help sustain the plan especially to fund the matching requirements for off-island health care coverage.

"Details of how this plan will work continue to be in development. Some of the components that are critical to the realization of this universal health care coverage through the Medicaid program include the requirement of a sustainable source of local matching funds, individual enrollment of beneficiaries and access to off-island care," she stated.

The Governor continues to pursue options with the State of Hawaii to re-establish access to Hawaii hospital providers for medically necessary care not available on island, Young explained, adding that "he intends to visit with the new Governor of Hawai'i in the New Year, leading up to the National Governor's Association Winter Meeting to discuss a Medicaid partnership with Hawaii's Medicaid program.

Gov. Lolo said, "This is a monumental first step to help our people receive the quality care they deserve. But the time has come for our people and our government leaders to understand that we must start paying into the health care system if we are to have the access that we want. Nothing is free in this world anymore. If we don't help pay for the health care we need, then we will continue to have no access for off-island care and we will continue to struggle with trying to improve our local hospital and community clinics." ***(Joyetter Feagaimaalii-Luamanu)***

ESL LEARNERS NMC

The Northern Marianas College recently hosted 52 students from Koryo High School in Japan. The students visited NMC to participate in the NMC Community Development Institute's English Language Development Program.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 11, 2002

Agencies clear Saipan of Pongsona's garbage

Different government agencies collectively held an island-wide clearing operation to clean different sites affected by supertyphoon Pongsona, two days after the Emergency Management Office declared the CNMI safe. Yesterday, the Marianas Visitors Authority dispatched teams to the Beach Road and other tourist areas to trim and chop down uprooted trees and to collect other garbage brought on by strong winds during the weekend. The Department of Public Works also deployed teams to Garapan, the Middle Road, and parts of southern Saipan to clean up the typhoon mess that had accumulated during the three-day nonstop downpour.

Rota awaits presidential disaster declaration

With Rota still in total blackout, authorities fear that an outbreak of diseases may result from drinking water that may be contaminated by bacteria and other microorganisms. This comes amid efforts by the CNMI government to have President Bush declare not just Rota but the entire Commonwealth as a major disaster area, after receiving reports that typhoon Pongsona also wreaked havoc on Anatahan in the Northern Islands. "We also need to include Anatahan so we're not seeking for individual islands, but possibly for the entire CNMI to be declared [a major disaster area]," the Governor said.

December 11, 2011

Fund: Judicial building loan arrears at $1.2M

The board of trustees of the NMI Retirement Fund directed on Friday its administrator, Richard Villagomez, to discuss and clarify once and for all issues about the judicial building loan with the Fitial administration before the board starts deliberating on the foreclosure option, which will be the board's last resort to collect its investment. Fund chair Sixto Igisomar made this clear during the board meeting Friday after learning that the government/judiciary has not been remitting payment pursuant to the loan agreement for 10 months now. Villagomez reported that the outstanding arrears from the agency is approximately $1.2 million as of Nov. 30 this year, or an expected monthly remittance of $120,000.

Bank counsel: Flores' claim for $200K lacks common sense

Saipan Mayor Donald G. Flores' claim that he purchased Certificate of Deposit in the amount of $200,000 in 1993 from the now defunct Union Bank as a long-term investment defies common sense, according to a lawyer for Union Bank of California. Attorney Elyze McDonald Iriarte, counsel for Union Bank of California (UBC), said for that long-term investment, Flores purchased a certificate of deposit that matured in a very short 32 days, with interest "payable at maturity" and made no demand for 15 years. Flores also admits having "common knowledge" that the First Hawaiian Bank moved into the same building Union Bank had occupied, meaning that he was aware Union Bank no longer operated in Saipan after 2011, said Iriarte in UBC's reply in support of First Hawaiian Bank's motion to dismiss Flores' lawsuit.

December 11, 2008

Fitial asks OIA for $3.8M to fund CUC repairs

Gov. Benigno Fitial has written to Office of Insular Affairs director Nikolao Pula requesting $3.8 million to rehabilitate engines at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp's main power plant. In the letter Fitial details the plan and process CUC will undergo to fix the engines and why more funding is necessary. In September Pula had written Fitial asking for a more detailed plan on the use of funds. "To clarify, CUC's request for additional $3.8 million to fund continuing rehabilitation efforts for Saipan Power Plant 1 engines is prompted by CUC's inability to fund major repairs of PP1 engines from its own limited working capital resources," Fitial wrote.

Continental's flight attendant gets car for perfect attendance

A Continental Micronesia employee who posted a perfect attendance from January to July this year received a car for her dedication and reliability. Guam-based flight attendant Irene Redona-Carle, a 14-year veteran and Japanese language speaker, received an invitation to Houston to meet with Larry Kellner, Continental Airlines chief executive officer and chairman, and Jeff Smisek, Continental Airlines President and Chief Operating Officer. Continental officers drew Redona-Carle's name and eight others from among the thousands of qualified employees entered in the Perfect Attendance Drawing.

Bill establishing new base salary schedule introduced

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

House floor leader Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) introduced yesterday a bill that will establish a new base salary schedule for classified civil service government employees as well as increase the salary ceiling for government employees.

With the help of the Civil Service Commission, the Legislature recognizes the need for revisions to the compensation plan for civil service employees, House Bill 18-213 states.

"The increasing federal minimum wage has made the first 10 pay levels in the salary schedule no longer applicable. In addition, the current compensation plan provides for mandatory within-grade increases for each year of satisfactory performance, which the government has not been able to implement since 2002 due to lack of funding."

Under the proposed new base salary schedule, a 35-pay level structure with 12 steps is used as the framework for the classification of civil service positions.

It starts with $6.25 per hour salary ($12,584 per year) for pay level 1, step 1 and increases by at least $0.10 until it reaches pay level 35, which is $17.95 per hour ($37,331.96 per year), step 1. Step 12 for the former is $8.60 per hour ($17,889.96 per year), while the same step for the latter is $25.52 per hour (53,072.73 per year).

Demapan said it's about time that a new base salary schedule is enacted given that the last one conducted was 1991, while the last actual salary increase was implemented in 2002.

"The increase in minimum wage continues to grow every year as well as the increase in prices of commodities and other things. A lot of these civil service employees have been stuck into this salary scale. Some couldn't come up because they reached their maximum. Because of the current law that they have, they couldn't move up unless they move to another job or promoted to a higher position," he said.

The two-term lawmaker said that implementing a new base salary schedule would help the government in the long term because it would result in more content and efficient staff.

"Rather than allow the government to grow further, if we provide an incentive for current government employees and take care of them they could be more productive and be more efficient. Rather than recruit more government employees, why don't we take care of who we have, give them incentive by increasing their salary so they can be more productive and efficient and perhaps there could be some cross-training within the department. Doing that it would create a good working relationship. We really need to take care of them now," added Demapan.

He said he has no illusions that HB 18-213 will pass during the lame duck 18th Legislature.

"It's not going to be passed, but nonetheless I will officially introduce it. If this bill doesn't go through in the 18th Legislature I will reintroduce it again in the 19th Legislature. I'm introducing it now so current members can have an idea already so when the 19th comes they pretty much know it already."

Demapan, who won a third term in the Nov. 4 elections, said that other members are always welcome to co-sponsor the measure. "It's a good bill as it provides incentive for civil service government employees."

The House will hold its last session probably next week and its *sine die* is on Jan. 5, 2015.

NMC Nursing Club cares for island

The Northern Mariana College Nursing Club turned its care and attention to a new beneficiary last month, participating in the Marianas Visitors Authority's "Beautify My Marianas" campaign to help improve the island environment.

Sixteen members of the club cleaned a two-mile strip of the beach in Susupe, facing rainy conditions and filling a pickup truckload with trash ranging from beer cans to plastic debris and cardboard.

"Along the beach there was only one trash bin available, but it too was rusted and broken at the bottom. The trash was scattered around the bin and not actually in the bin," said the club in their post-cleanup report. "We believe that one or more signs should be put up indicating the fines for littering. More trash bins that aren't falling apart need to be implemented, especially in the beach area around the [restaurant] establishment. We picked up a great amount of beer cans and beer bottles there.

The "Beautify My Marianas" program offers $100 for each mile cleaned up in assigned areas.

Cleanup participants were Byung Kwan Ohn, Allison Madamba, Mayleen Aldan, Maria Atrero, Evangelina Manalili, Andrew Villanueva, Seung Jun Cha, Rosher Apolinar, Lealynn Valdez, Marianne Ejercito, Peachy Quitugua, Maritoni Raganot, Michael Hidalgo, Gemmilie Eugenio, Cristine Ocampo, and Imari Feria.

For more information or an application for "Beautify My Marianas," visit the MVA homepage at www.mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the Northern Marianas College Nursing Club collect trash along the beach in Susupe on Nov. 8, 2014, as part of the "Beautify My Marianas" program administered by the Marianas Visitors Authority and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber to host marketing workshop

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will hold its monthly seminar on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014, from 9am to 12pm at the Marianas Business Plaza, Suite 315. The three-hour workshop will concentrate on marketing research and strategies. The event will focus on the basic premises of marketing: your company's mission, vision and values, and how to communicate them to the general public to your best advantage.

Marketing has a significant and continuous impact on every part of your business. It drives business. Your entire organization needs to believe in the benefits if you are going to reap the rewards.

Join us at the Chamber office on Dec. 16 to learn how to get your entire organization excited about and contributing to your corporate marketing plan. Don't have a plan? This seminar will help you develop one, or will help you tweak the one you have to better maximize your efforts. You'll discover how marketing impacts every part of the customer journey and what tools, tactics, and strategies you can use to ensure measurable results.

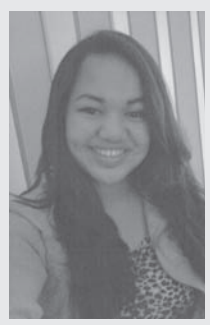
The presenter will be Luis Villagomez, sales and marketing manager at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. He has great experience at the Hyatt. The Hyatt clearly has an excellent marketing strategy as far as branding, customer service, advertising, and public relations. Villagomez believes that marketers must understand concepts and tactics before creating strategies. He'll also delve into building effective public relations and e-commerce for your company.

Advance registration for the seminar is now being accepted at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce office at the Marianas Business Plaza Suite 315, third floor. Call 234-7150 or e-mail coordinator@saipan-chamber.com to reserve your attendance. Registration fee for Chamber members is $20; ($30 for non-Chamber members) and includes coffee, tea and refreshments. Seating is limited to the first 40 paid attendees. ***(SCC)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A happy birthday shoutout to Kevin John Razon "Bubz," who celebrates his birthday today! Cheers to you and many more years to come! Party like the rockstar/superstar that you are! Have an epically epic day! Let the haters hate but continue to shine on and be an inspiration to the youth you help and inspire on a daily basis! Much love, man! Peace and God bless you always.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy 23rd birthday to my inaanak, Allen Marie C. Montano! We wish you all the best and happiness in your life.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday to our goddaughter, Tesha Masga! May the Lord bless you on your special day and with many more years to come. We love you! Love, Niña, Niño Eric, and Izaiah.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday to our goddaughter, Princess Miyoko Masga, center! May God bless you on your special day baby. We love you! Greetings come from Nina, Nino Eric and Izaiah.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy 6th birthday to Zion Stone L. Camacho. We love you endlessly! Greetings come from Mom, Dad, and brothers Kevin, Rootz, and Blaze.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday greetings go out to Daddy Alex! Wishing you more blessings and we hope you'll enjoy your day! We love you! Greetings come from your princess and your baby girl, Althea Dionn and Diann.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Empty threats vs. real immigration reform

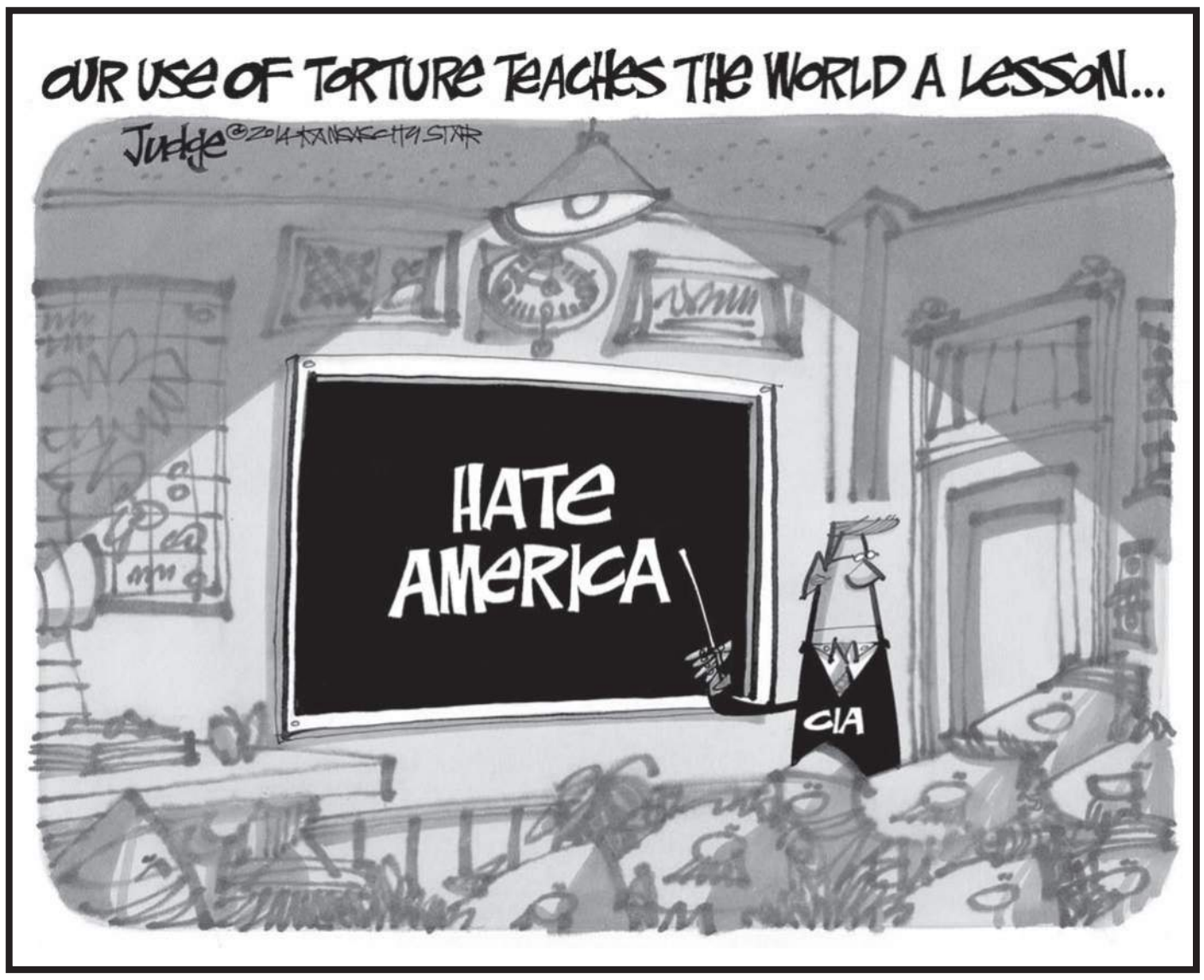
House Republicans once again find themselves choosing whether to govern or to make a point. Last year they embarked on a destined-to-fail effort to "defund Obamacare," leading to a 16-day government shutdown. Now, some Republicans want to "defund amnesty," a reference to President Obama's move to rule out deportation for more than 4 million people who are in the country illegally. Rather than make empty threats with appropriations bills, Republicans should take up Obama's challenge to develop a coherent, comprehensive overhaul of the country's badly flawed immigration laws.

You might think that one trip around the hamster wheel would be enough. Yet here we are again, with the government's current funding measure expiring Dec. 11 and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) rallying like-minded House members to threaten another shutdown. To fend them off, House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio), who was no fan of the "defund Obamacare" gambit, had the House vote Thursday on a bill barring the president from deferring deportation of any category of immigrant in the country illegally. That bill passed on a near-party-line vote, but won't even come to a vote in the Senate, let alone survive a veto.

Boehner also wants his chamber to pass bills providing full-year funding for every federal agency except the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees immigration, disaster assistance, airport and border security, and a variety of domestic anti-terrorism efforts. That department would be funded only until early next year, allowing the new, Republican-controlled Congress to put its own stamp on the measure. But the threat to "defund amnesty" by cutting off money for the department is a purely symbolic gesture too. The agency that will carry out Obama's executive action on immigration is funded by fees that can be spent until lawmakers explicitly revoke them _ which Republicans won't have the votes to do even in the new Congress.

This situation should feel distressingly familiar to Republicans. The public isn't likely to respond well to shutting down the Department of Homeland Security any more than it did to the idea of shutting down the rest of the federal government. Besides, for all of the rhetoric inside the Beltway about Obama overstepping his authority, this dispute really boils down to whether the president can tell some of the millions of people the government doesn't have the resources to deport that they can, temporarily, hold a job legally in the United States. Considering the internal politics of the House, Boehner's approach may be the best way to protect the country from another federal shutdown. Ultimately, though, Republicans can't fix immigration policy by taking agencies hostage. They have to legislate.

(c) 2014 Los Angeles Times



Fang Pi Old Fart

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

She was an odd sight in a sea of black. Shenbei Center where I live, the old section of what is referred to as a new town north of Shenyang (my building is 20 years old, the oldest among the tenement homes, and it is referred to as ancient) favors black in winter, the countryside folks hang on to their leather attires while the new urban takes to the sheen of the well insulated but lightweight black polyester!

The lady walked with a young girl who looked just over 10. I heard the child call her, *nai nai* ("mother mother"), the term for the father side grandma. *Lao lao,* ("old old") for the mother side grandma tells how patriarchy is entrenched in the culture.

The lady was an oddball among stark blandness of the common folks, wearing light orange-pink cover with matching gloves, decked in flesh-colored stockings reaching the upper thigh, clipped to matching tan undies revealed when she crouched (too quickly) to fix the grandchild's coat (yup, voyeur me looked!), sporting beige boots up the calf below the knees that she looked used to wearing. She did not make the *li tok li tak* sound of those trying to tiptoe with heels through the tulips! It was one of those rare sunny days and she must have been visiting from the south where the Kashmir overcoat fitted better along the *Bund* in Shanghai.

I meant to walk my neighborhood's back alleys and narrow pathways ever since I moved in March and on this particular day, the granny and her ward headed to one alley I was slated to explore. I was behind them some 10 paces when they suddenly quit walking. The quad opening ahead did not look too inviting and I suspected they changed their minds; a turn would have been an awkward squeeze. I caught up behind them when grandma unleashed a high decibel sound of *fang pi,* a methane exhaust.

Sensing presence behind, she turned around with a beatific smile, and since aging decreases one's sense of smell, I smiled back, not noticing any shift in the aroma of the enclosure! Their walk and mine proceeded without further ado.

I would have forgotten this incident had not a friend decided to share an Internet funny, "Old Fart." The grandma in my neighborhood fits not the English pejorative that disdains aging and the act of farting for she was both aging and she just farted. I recall Korea '72 when someone explained to me that as a guest in a household meal, it would not displease the matron of the house if I farted loudly after dinner! The act was culturally respectable. An equally loud burp was OK, too!

The lady was China for the moment, at least until sundown or the length of an alley business transaction. China does not build with longevity in mind as eternity guides architects in Europe. It programs obsolescence well, and the lady shined like the sun for the moment, not too anxious about what was ahead.

This might be the dynamism of the construction and real estate industry in China where owning of a unit bought from accumulated savings since Deng started the opening up and reform is parleyed as investment. Immediate occupants of units in the new apartments, high-rises, and condos may look few but someone signed up for them with the requisite deposit and monthly mortgage payments, and that's all the central government and the banks need to keep the housing bubble from bursting.

China is ancient but hardly an old fart. Ancient is a category of space, ladled with layers of accumulated confidences rather than measured in lengths of time. In this reflection, the old fart in our title is also *moi,* living my 70th year.

Old came vividly this year. I do not run away from it. It was, and now, is. Noticeably big time is the dexterity of fingers in the increasing incidences of inability to hold on to things. Lack of elbow coordination bumps into furnishings, and the too frequent loss of balance in my steps make mid-section girth a concern. We mentioned the decreasing sharpness of our ability to smell and 20/20 vision now requires the aid of optic artifices.

The mind now grope for words that hastily dive down the edge of the subconscious, nowhere to be found, and when finally I connect to Google (slow in China; access is indirect) to research a subject only to discover that our concern has escaped fancy but the soaring flight of the imagination enters the various interesting rooms of the interior castle, leaving us distracted but mesmerized, leaving us to our lonesome and not remembering what it was we were looking for to begin with!

On the other hand, we developed distance from what used to be instant explosion of passion, either in jubilation or despair. That, or our reflexes have gone dull. In any case, it is familiar to spend a whole day tired for having kept busy all day but unable to show accomplishment of a single deed.

I am old. The *fang pi* is frequent by scent of bedsheet but like the lady and China, this old fart simply graces golden years, self-consciously ancient. Here's looking at you, *fang pi!*

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Bendision Saina

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Kada saina animu krumeansa famaguoña estake man-felis kareran niha. Diariu ma-mattit siha gi inaligau mantension kada patgon, 18 oras gi ha`ane.

I famaguon niha i nuebu na linachog simiya gi hatdin familia. Diariu marikononose yan satton na assistimientu gi manpresisu na nesessidat niha.

I nanan guma` megai `nai ha mattitgue` pot para una` fan nahoñg todus. Parehu i dos saina metgot sensian niha sakrifisiu yan minesñgun gi prebension todus.

`An pueñge, i nanan guma` ti dumeskansa estake todu mañgabales i famaguon. Ayu dispues `nai umasun umachigu` esta i finatton chatagmag. Todu dia kalamten muna`lagu neñkanu`, mamagase, man-prensa yan muna`gasgas mientras mangaige famaguon gi eskuela.

Gi hilu` pinasensia, mapipet famaguon niha gi ineyag linala` espirituat `sino dottrina. Tai finagpu` che`chu` niha mientras mangagaige famaguon niha gi papa` atuf gima` familia.

`Nai todu felis kareran kada unu, magof i dos amku` pot masuñgun todu obligasion niha pot man-gatbon flores gi hatdin ni siha muna` gasgas yan tumanume deste tutuhon. Mauleg na familia!

Guinaiyan Nana

Soluke matachoñg hau ya un` arastreha diariu na assistimientun nanamu `nai siña un` li`e haf` finaposña para un` nina` dañkulu. Lamayot patte ta po`lu kumu mohon otdinariu na tautau gi fihonta lau guiya i biha i fitme na tohnen todus gi katkuet ora.

Gef hasan tali`e tuhu` lago`ña `sino kume hinalañg ni obligasioña. Ya maseha haf` na chinatsaga u guaha, todu i tiempu katma `nai mamatinas disposision. Guiya ennau na palao`an i satton fuma` guma` i hinatsan tata button fanliheñg familia. Dispues, kabales magahet guiya gumuaiya kada patgon bastara ke guiya mamañagu.

Gi todu tiempon linala`ña tumachu gi fihon asaguaña kumu i fitme na pisu parehu ha` halom abundansia yan ha`ilas. Satton gi todu finaposña yan tatan famaguoña.

Mesñgon na biha

Hu li`e un` biha antes macho`chu` kumu labandera. Todu dia gi bateha mamagase dispues ha tala`, inkola, atbidon yan prensa antes de pupueñge. Esta i lemlem tautau `nai umahanau para iya siha.

`An mattu gi gima`, ha areglaye uniku lahiña senaña antes de tutuhon otru siha obligasion. Todu este na sakrifisiu pot uniku lahiña. Dispues dumeskansa esta i sigiente oga`an. Mesñgon pot obligasion gi patgoña. Guaha mohon na tiempu lumabandedera pot nesessidat mantension familia?

Makalamya na amku` ya hasan huli`e yayas. Lau fiet gi un` offisiu `nai ha sosoda` apas mantension niha yan lahiña.

Hu li`e lokue` un` bihan mame manguleg eskomen mai`es, ha pada` ya hana` masan hilu` komat. Antes de ennau, hanayane-yu` atmayas mientras mamasa i titiyas. Mai`es fresku ni sumen aya yan finadeni` asnen tukon sino satdinas tumates.

Todu pot todu sumen fitme na pisu i nanan guma` gi familia. Guiya chumachalau pinadesen kada patgon ya ayu hafa` sahñgiñgiye i mas chatsaga `sino namase`.

Dispues de humanau

Dispues de ha diñgu hit i nanan guma` `nai tali`e kuantu minanñge`ña gumainana. Hombre `nai umachigu` ilelegta ha` na siempre una`lu tatte. Estague` `nai a`anog i chetton na sentimentun patgon gi sainaña. Lau esta madispone i amku`.

Sige umensinahyau konsuelu hinasoghu `nai sige halom i tropa yan probleman niha. Hu bisita siha gi seputtura man-gagau ayudu sa` dididi` kulan makat. Mana` kontentuyu` dispues.

Ayu na palao`an i sessu hu konbetsiasune antes pot petsonat siha na pinadesihu taigue esta maseha pot para u ta`lun umulus iluhu. Hu tutuhon sumatban maisa haf` problemahu siha adumididi` estake metgot konfiansaghu mismu. Yangin ke`yau hau, pues hinanau i biha kulan mohon matobus baston-mu. Gi hilu` antau, minesñgon, konkariñu yan anchu na pinasensia hafanu`e hit mauleg na chechu` tautau. Ti apasiyun todu i setbisioña.

Asuntun parentela

Un` talo`ane hu usune gumuadog ñaihon haye siha man-parientes-hu gi todu atmos banda. Hu soda` tat na`an kumu Añgoghu, Aquiñgiñgog, Acosta, Reyes, Roberto, Cruz, Guerrero, Ilo, Mettao, Mañgarero, Romolor, Seman yan otru siha na`an.

Hu soda` lokue` na i finenina na Juan Rosario mattu America ginen España gi 1523. Guine, i primet ma-appunta na gobietnu ni Español si Mariano Rosario Sablan. Hu tuñgu` na Cruz i prefektu apotyidu-hu ti DelRosario. Lau puru este siha na birada mafanana`an ni man-amku` che`chu` lahe. Lau magofyu` sa` hu tuñgu` dispues haf` kabales tinateg-hu.

Ti anog na patteyu` Karolinas pot Sablan i talu` na na`anhu. Lau gaige i Mañgarero gi as nana-hu.

Kabales lokue` na todu Karolinas guine parentes-hu maseha haye-gue`. I ma`gas na chief pot tradision si Chief Elat. Si chief Agrubw pot nabigasion (kumareran tasi) ni kumone` mage Marianas i Karolinas siha `nai yinamag tano` niha ni pagyu. Mauleg lokue` umarikonose kau magahet na gagaigeha` tatautau Agrubw giya Mañagaha pat hagas sudadanon Fransia.

Guaha siha gi na`an isla siha guine finu` Karolinas. Tinian kumeke ilegña agaga` na minachum atdau—red sunset. Saipan tai sinahguan—empty island—era `nai man-mamueba i Chamorro para Guam pot chetnot sarampion yan bitguelas pot no u fan fininas ni dos pesti.

Sige lokue` hu eñgulu` haye gi tautau siha ni ha bendise si Yuus Tata pumatlinuye i natibu guine. Gaige ennau na tropa gi ayu i manmasede umokupa iya Asia yan Pasifiku. Ti baba ta guadog haye na`aña yan manu ha fatoigue siha na tanu antes de u sugu` Marianas.

Guaha na`aña iya Marianas antes de umatatpañge "Mariana" ni Español? Na`an un` raraina si Mariana ginen España. Siakassu in` tiñgu` na`an O`Perlas Iya Pasifiku yahu kumetuñgu`. Gi mismu tiempu mauleg umana` fan dinanche na`an lugat siha guine gi prefektu na`an Chamorro tat kumu Magpi, Tagpochau, I Deni, Matansa, Afetña, Sadog Tasi, Achugau, Galaide, Puntan Muchot, Fina Sisu, As Gonno, yan otru siha lugat. Tana` para na`an inayau pot mapot i pelun ha pronunsia na`an lugat gi finu` Chamorro.

Bring on body cams, but don't pretend they'll prevent controversy

By MARK DAVIS
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

For a while there, it looked like a great week to suggest body cameras on all police officers to prevent disastrous flare-ups like we've seen in Ferguson, Missouri.

The cameras are a great idea. When protesters bent on racial revenge ignore a thoughtful grand jury's examination of actual testimony and evidence, our system of justice is threatened. Actual footage of Officer Darren Wilson defending himself against an attacking Michael Brown might have left some Ferguson businesses standing and some race-hustlers silenced.

But now comes proof that the presence of video will not always settle arrest controversies. The July 17 images of Eric Garner's fatal struggle with New York City police officer Daniel Pantaleo document a melee sufficiently disturbing to spark calls for an indictment across racial and political lines.

When it was announced that the officer would not be indicted, protests sprang up instantly, as did a debate over whether justice had been done.

The differences between Garner's Staten Island death and Michael Brown's are instantly clear. In Ferguson, there is no video, but there is a mountain of evidence indicating Officer Wilson used deadly force to protect himself against a violent attack.

In New York, we have video—long minutes of clear, detailed video—and it settles nothing.

Yes, Garner is breaking New York's stupid law against selling loose cigarettes. Yes, he resists arrest. But he did not instigate the tensions by assaulting an officer. And when the officer's arm goes around Garner's neck as he repeatedly says "I can't breathe, I can't breathe, " you can hear the rumbling of a possible indictment coming down the tracks from miles away.

So why didn't it happen?

Amid a rush from many sides to recoil at the no-bill Wednesday night, some analysts dug deeper to find a basis for the grand jury's nonaction.

First, the "choke hold," which the police association disputes was used despite a medical examiner's finding of it as a partial cause of death: it is against stated NYPD policy, but not against the law, according to Georgetown law professor John Banzhaf, who bristles at the term "illegal choke hold."

Any attempt to criminalize the arrest would have faced additional challenges. Even the lowest bar, second-degree manslaughter, requires proving the defendant acted "recklessly."

But doesn't Garner's death make a strong argument for recklessness? Before absorbing the medical finding that Garner died at least in part due to his size and poor health, we should note that a dead suspect is not instant evidence of wrongful police behavior. Banzhaf cites Tasers and hazardous police-chase sideswipes as tactics that have resulted in death but remain in wide use due to overall effectiveness.

Unlike Ferguson, the Garner death invites principled disagreement that can actually yield constructive progress—at least if we can keep agitator Al Sharpton away from cameras and microphones, and if President Obama and his outgoing attorney general can restrain themselves from using these events to paint a false portrait of a racially poisonous America.

But the Garner case should serve as a caution: While body cameras are a valuable tool that can provide far better evidence than the shifting and fictitious testimony some witnesses offered in Ferguson, they offer no guarantees that future arrests will be slam dunks either for or against officer indictments.

On Wednesday night, while NBA legend-turned-social commentator Charles Barkley told CNN that "when the cops are trying to arrest you and you fight back, things go wrong," erstwhile Obama confidant and momentary TV pundit Van Jones was tweeting that "Police lynched a man on video and got away with it."

So bring on the cop-cams, but don't pretend they will bring an end to the disagreements that will still swirl around future arrests.

Mark Davis is a North Texas-based conservative talk show host who regularly writes for the Dallas Morning News.

VA system has been unfairly maligned

By SUZANNE GORDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

One of the biggest—and most misunderstood—stories of 2014 was about the nation's largest health care system, the Veterans Health Administration.

Revelations that managers at the VA were concealing long wait times led to the resignation of VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and has left the lasting impression that the VA does not deliver high-quality care.

The drumbeat of negative coverage has also made it difficult for the new VA secretary, Robert A. McDonald, to recruit more physicians, nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants to ease the staffing shortage that caused the waits in the first place.

And this negative coverage also obscured the basic fact that the VA delivers some of the best—indeed, some of the only—coordinated health care in the entire country.

While many health systems and hospitals in the private sector talk about patient safety and teamwork, the VA actually delivers.

In many primary care clinics in the VA, a veteran going in to see his or her primary care physician will be treated by a team of nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists and psychologists who actually hold daily huddles about their patients face to face.

A patient with diabetes, congestive heart failure and post-traumatic stress disorder may spend a half hour or more with his physician. Then he may sit down with a pharmacist for 45 minutes to review his complex medications before going to talk to a psychologist or social worker about his mental health issues.

The VA also has a system of nursing homes for veterans that has better staffing than many for-profit nursing homes.

And the VA has done pioneering research in patient safety, for example, dramatically reducing rates of one of the most vicious hospital superbugs, Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), throughout its 152 hospitals.

For physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, physical therapists, and other health care professionals, the VA offers two things the private sector seems unable to provide.

One is ready access to help in dealing with complex cases. A rehab physician told me she left her position at a prestigious northeastern teaching hospital and signed up with the VA because she could finally work on a real team with physical therapists and speech language pathologists.

The other advantage for health care providers at the VA is they don't have to run a gauntlet of insurance company restrictions and denials. The government covers the costs, so the providers can actually tend to their patients.

According to many newspaper accounts, the staffs at the VA hospitals are demoralized. But the providers I've talked to over the past six months don't seem that way at all. They're energized to heal our nation's veterans, and they appreciate the system of coordinated care that the VA has in place.

What demoralizes me is the failure of the media to cover this part of the story.

Bad news may sell better, but it does a disservice to the wonderful people who care for our veterans.

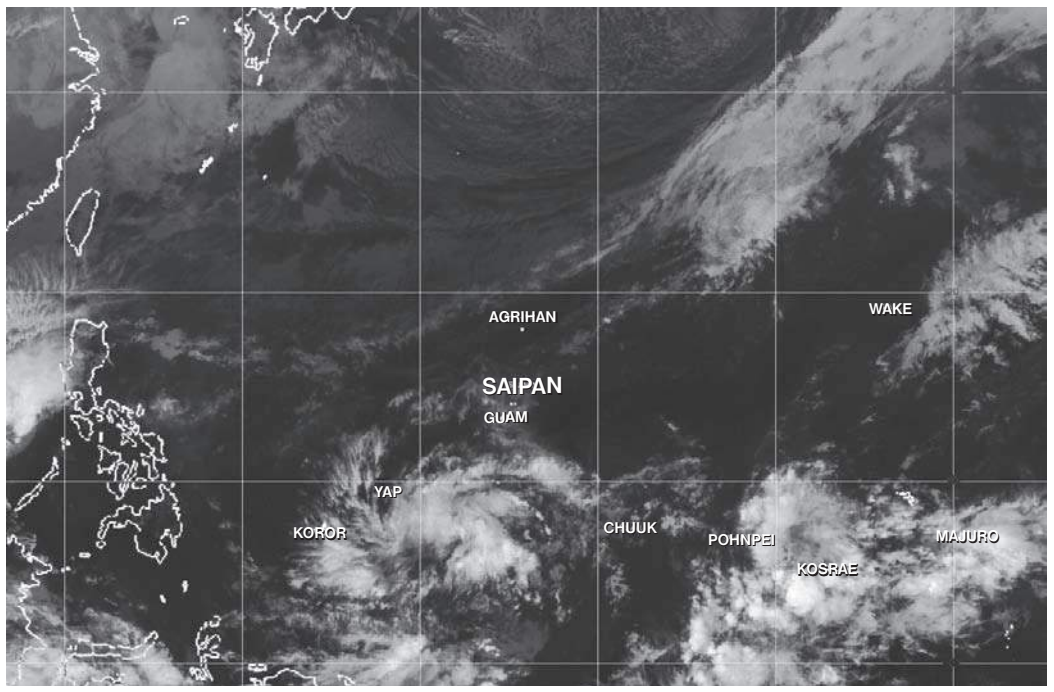
Suzanne Gordon is a health care journalist and the co-author of Beyond the Checklist: What Else Health Care Can Learn from Aviation Teamwork and Safety *(Cornell University Press). She wrote this for Progressive Media Project, a source of liberal commentary on domestic and international issues; it is affiliated with* The Progressive *magazine.*

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SAURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88º ▼77º	▲88º ▼77º	▲88º ▼77º	▲87º ▼77º	▲87º ▼76º

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from near Minami Torishima at 25N155E to 18N140E to beyond 130E at 16N. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 300 miles north of this boundary. A weak surface trough is generating scattered showers just southeast of Minami Torishima in the area bounded by 24N155E to 24N160E to 21N154E back to 24N155E. A tropical disturbance centered southeast of Yap near 4N142E is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between Koror and Chuuk within 150 miles of a line from 6N135E to 9N149E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in the area bounded by EQ156E to 10N160E to 3N171E back to EQ156E. This includes Kosrae but is just east of Pohnpei. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with trade-wind convergence are occurring within 100 miles of a line from 8N167E to 7N171E to 7N173E to 6N180E including Kwajalein and Majuro. An upper-level trough stretches from 23N169E across Wake Island to 16N166E. Scattered showers associated with this feature are found east of Wake Island in the area bounded by 16N167E to 21N169E to 23N173E to 18N174E back to 16N167E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼80
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼81

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲73	▼60
Beijing	Sunny	▲38	▼22
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲67	▼57
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼71
London	Sunny	▲47	▼43
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲72	▼56
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼75
Melbourne	Showers	▲73	▼57
Miami	Sunny	▲68	▼51
New York	Ice	▲39	▼33
Osaka	Rain	▲57	▼42
Paris	Showers	▲50	▼41
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲45	▼29
Rome	Sunny	▲55	▼40
Salem	Rain	▲56	▼49
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲65	▼59
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲31	▼19
Tokyo	Rain	▲63	▼45
Washington, DC	Windy	▲45	▼33

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:33 AM	Today	High Tide:	-0.1 Feet
11:36 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:34 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.1 Feet
9:53 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:33 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Saturday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	5:49 PM
Monday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:54 PM	9:59 AM
Friday	10:42 PM	10:40 AM
Saturday	11:42 PM	11:19 AM
Sunday		11:57 AM
Monday	12:15 AM	12:36 PM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

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Business

Government: Gas to average $2.60 next year

The Energy Department again slashed its prediction for next year's average price of gasoline across the U.S., this time to $2.60 a gallon. That would be 23 percent below this year's projected average and the lowest full-year average since 2009.

If that comes to pass, the price drop will save U.S. drivers $100 billion over the course of the year based on current consumption levels. That will boost the overall economy by reducing shipping and transportation costs, and leaving consumers more money to spend on other things.

In its most recent short-term energy outlook, released Tuesday, the Energy Department's Energy Information Administration cut its gasoline price forecast for 2015 by 35 cents a gallon. It was the second time in two months that the EIA cut the forecast by more than 30 cents a gallon.

The average national price of gasoline to $2.66 a gallon on Tuesday according to AAA, 61 cents less than last year at this time. The national average has fallen every day since September 26.

The steep drop in gasoline prices is a result of a drop in crude oil supplies. Global crude prices have fallen to around $66 per barrel from a June high of $115 per barrel. Global supplies are high thanks in part to rising production in the U.S., while global demand is relatively weak because of slowing economic growth in Europe and Asia.

The lower crude prices are forcing oil companies to scale back drilling plans for next year. As a result, the EIA trimmed its forecast for U.S. production growth. U.S. crude oil output is expected to rise by 300,000 barrels per day to 9.3 million barrels a day. The EIA had previously expected production to rise by 400,000 barrels per day.

Despite a colder than normal November, the EIA expects home heating costs to fall this winter compared to last year. Weather forecasters do not expect a repeat of last year's consistently low temperatures, and prices for propane and heating oil are much lower than last year. ***(AP)***

AP

In this Nov. 12, 2014 file photo, Lydia Holland replaces the gas nozzle after filling up at a gas station in Sacramento, Calif.

Exxon sees abundant oil, gas far into future

By JONATHAN FAHEY
AP ENERGY WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—North America, once a sponge that sucked in a significant portion of the world's oil, will instead be supplying the world with oil and other liquid hydrocarbons by the end of this decade, according to ExxonMobil's annual long-term energy forecast.

And the "almost unspeakable" amount of natural gas found in recent years in the U.S. and elsewhere in North America will be enough to make the region one of the world's biggest exporters of that fuel by 2025, even as domestic demand for it increases, according to Bill Colton, Exxon's chief strategist.

"The world has such an improved outlook for supplies," Colton said in an interview. "Peak oil theorists have been run out of town by American ingenuity."

In a forecast that might make economists happy but environmentalists fret, Exxon's two chief products, oil and natural gas, will be abundant and affordable enough to meet the rising demand for energy in the developing world as the global middle class swells to 5 billion from 2 billion and buys energy-hungry conveniences such as cars and air conditioners.

This is a result of advances in drilling technology that have made it possible for engineers to reach oil and gas in unconventional rock and extreme locations and quieted talk that the world was quickly running out of oil.

And it is despite what Exxon assumes will be increasingly strict policies around the world on emissions of carbon dioxide and other gasses emitted by fossil fuel use that scientists say are triggering dangerous changes to the world's climate.

Exxon's outlook forecasts world energy supply and demand through 2040 and is updated every year. It is noted by investors and policymakers and used by Exxon to shape its long-term strategy. Colton said the recent sharp decline in oil prices does not have much effect on the company's long-term vision, and that the company expects prices to rise and fall, sometimes dramatically, throughout the period.

Exxon's vision is broadly similar to that of other forecasters, including those by the International Energy Agency, which released its most recent long-term forecast last month. Demand for energy will grow rapidly in coming decades in the developing world, while demand in the developed world is expected to be flat or even decline as countries impose stricter emissions policies and become more efficient.

Nuts! Korean flight delayed by first-class spat

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Forget dust-ups over reclining seats in economy class. There's a new and exclusive twist on inflight anger: Nut rage in first class.

A recent Korean Air flight was delayed when its chairman's daughter, who was also vice president responsible for cabin service at the airline, ordered a senior crew member off the plane. His crime? Allowing her and other passengers in the pointy end of the aircraft to be served bagged macadamia nuts instead of nuts on a plate.

The executive, Cho Hyun-ah, resigned Tuesday amid a storm of public criticism in South Korea. The airline had earlier excused her behavior even as it apologized for inconveniencing passengers. It said she will no longer serve as head of cabin service but will retain other executive roles at the airline and its affiliate businesses.

Hyun-ah

South Korean media reported this week that the flight from New York to Incheon, South Korea, returned to the gate after Cho told the head of the cabin crew to leave the plane. The reports said Cho quarreled with crew in the first-class cabin and the flight departed 20 minutes late.

Cho, 40, is the oldest child of Korean Air's chairman, tycoon Cho Yang-ho. Her two siblings are also executives at South Korea's largest airline.

The incident caused an uproar in South Korea where it was seen as an example of over-mighty behavior by the offspring of the moneyed elite.

The South Korean economy is dominated by family-controlled conglomerates known as chaebol. Family members often wield greater influence over major companies than shareholders and executives with no blood ties to the founding family. The Cho family owns about 10 percent of Korean Air Lines Co., part of a business empire than spans the travel, logistics, hotel and leisure industries.

Korean Air confirmed that Flight 86 was delayed at John F. Kennedy airport on Dec. 5 due to the nut incident. But the company said the decision to disembark the crew member was made by the flight's captain.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Abercrombie CEO abruptly retires as sales fall

NEW YORK (AP)—Abercrombie & Fitch's longtime and embattled CEO Michael Jeffries has abruptly retired as the once-hip teen clothing chain struggles to regain its popularity. Investors applauded the move, pushing Abercrombie's shares up 8 percent. Jeffries, who has served as CEO since February 1992, is also retiring from the retailer's board of directors. He reinvented the chain from an ailing retailer of hunting apparel to a seller of teen clothing that became a must-have brand for young consumers. But since the recession, it has lost its appeal amid stiffer competition and changing tastes. Last week, Abercrombie & Fitch cut its annual profit outlook and reported an 11.5 percent drop in sales in its third quarter.

Apple trial likely to go on with new plaintiff

OAKLAND, California (AP)—A billion-dollar class-action lawsuit against Apple will likely continue, after a 65-year-old Massachusetts business consultant read about the plaintiffs' floundering case online and volunteered to represent consumers in the suit. A federal judge said she's tentatively satisfied with a proposal to add Barbara Bennett as the new named plaintiff in the lawsuit over Apple's iTunes software and the price of its iPods. Bennett, who sometimes used her iPod to listen to music while ice skating, boarded a plane early Tuesday and flew to California at the request of lawyers who are suing Apple Inc. on behalf of an estimated 8 million consumers who purchased iPods between 2006 and 2009.

California prosecutors sue Uber; Lyft settles

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—California prosecutors sued Uber on Tuesday over the ride-booking company's background checks of drivers and other allegations, adding to the popular startup's worldwide legal woes. San Francisco County District Attorney George Gascon also announced that Uber competitor Lyft agreed to pay $500,000 and change some of its business practices to settle its own lawsuit. Lyft will have to pay only half the fine if it complies with the agreement's terms over the next year. The lawsuits filed in San Francisco Superior Court are the latest legal hurdles to confront the nascent ride-hailing industry. The industry in general—and Uber in particular—have been battling lawsuits and regulatory issues over whether the businesses are regulated taxi services or app-making technology companies.

Nation

Senate probe catalogs brutality against detainees

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States brutalized scores of terror suspects with interrogation tactics that turned secret CIA prisons into chambers of suffering and did nothing to make America safer after the 9/11 attacks, Senate investigators concluded Tuesday.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's torture report, years in the making, accused the CIA of misleading its political masters about what it was doing with its "black site" captives and deceiving the nation about the effectiveness of its techniques.

The report was the first public accounting of tactics employed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and it described far harsher actions than had been widely known.

Tactics included confinement to small boxes, weeks of sleep deprivation, simulated drowning, slapping and slamming, and threats to kill, harm or sexually abuse families of the captives.

The report produced revulsion among many, challenges to its veracity among some lawmakers and a sharp debate about whether it should have been released at all.

GOP Sen. John McCain, tortured in Vietnam as a prisoner of war, was out of step with some fellow Republicans in welcoming the report and endorsing its findings.

"We gave up much in the expectation that torture would make us safer," he said in a Senate speech. "Too much."

Five hundred pages were released, representing the executive summary and conclusions of a still-classified 6,700-page full investigation.

President Barack Obama declared some of the past practices to be "brutal, and as I've said before, constituted torture in my mind. And that's not who we are," he told the Spanish-language TV network Telemundo in an interview.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the Democratic committee chairman whose staff prepared the summary, branded the findings a stain on the nation's history.

"Under any common meaning of the term, CIA detainees were tortured," she declared, commanding the Senate floor for an extended accounting of the techniques identified in the investigation.

The report catalogued the use of ice baths, death threats, shackling in the cold and much more. Three detainees faced the simulated drowning technique known as waterboarding. Many developed psychological problems.

But the "enhanced interrogation techniques" didn't produce the results that really mattered, the report asserts in its most controversial conclusion. It cites CIA cables, emails and interview transcripts to rebut the central justification for torture—that it thwarted terror plots and saved American lives.

In a statement, CIA Director John Brennan said the agency made mistakes and has learned from them.

But he also asserted the coercive techniques "did produce intelligence that helped thwart attack plans, capture terrorists and save lives."

George Tenet, who was CIA director at the time, said in an interview: "We know that the program led to the capture of al-Qaida leaders and took them off the battlefield, that it prevented mass casualty attacks and that it saved thousands of American lives."

Top Republicans, including Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, agreed. But not Democrat Harry Reid of Nevada, the Senate majority leader. He said, "It got us nothing except a bad name."

The report, released after months of negotiations with the administration about what should be censored, was issued as U.S. embassies and military sites worldwide fortified security in case of an anti-American backlash.

Earlier this year, Feinstein accused the CIA of infiltrating Senate computer systems in a dispute over documents as relations between the investigators and the spy agency deteriorated, the issue still sensitive years after Obama ordered a halt to any such interrogation practices upon taking office.

President George W. Bush approved the program through a covert finding in 2002, but he wasn't briefed by the CIA about the details until 2006. At that time Bush expressed discomfort with the "image of a detainee, chained to the ceiling, clothed in a diaper and forced to go to the bathroom on himself."

After al-Qaida operative Abu Zubaydah was arrested in Pakistan in 2002, the CIA received permission to use waterboarding, sleep deprivation, close confinement and other techniques. Agency officials added unauthorized methods, the report says.

At least five men in CIA detention received "rectal rehydration," a form of feeding through the rectum. The report found no medical necessity for the treatment.

At least three in captivity were told their families would suffer, with CIA officers threatening to harm their children, sexually abuse the mother of one man, and cut the throat of another man's mother.

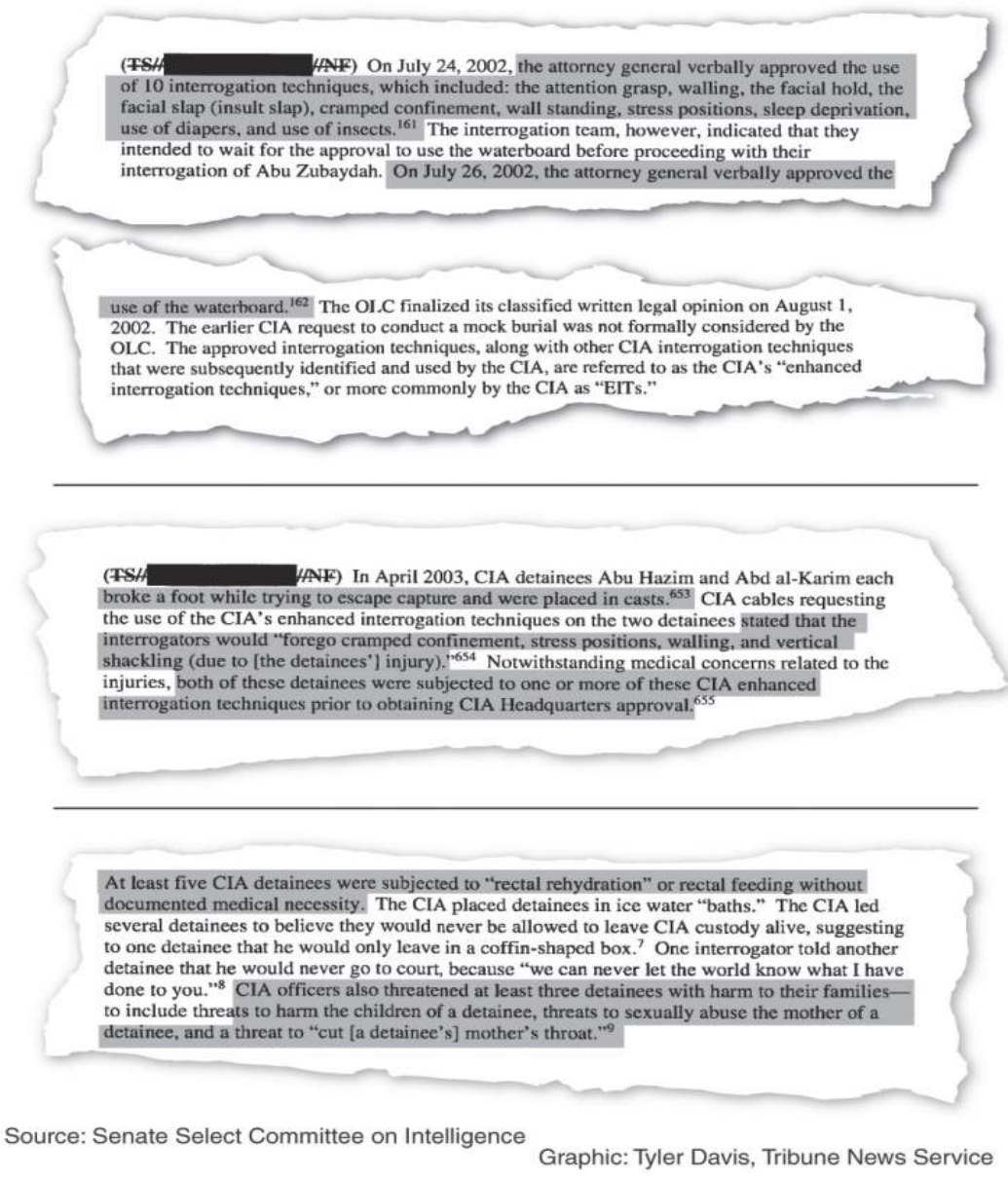
Zubaydah was held in a secret facility in Thailand, called "detention Site Green" in the report. Early on, with CIA officials believing he had information on an imminent plot, Zubaydah was left isolated for 47 days without questioning, the report says. Later, he was subjected to the panoply of techniques. He later suffered mental problems.

He wasn't alone. In September 2002, at a facility referred to as COBALT- the CIA's "Salt Pit" in Afghanistan—detainees were kept isolated and in darkness. Their cells had only a bucket for human waste.

Redha al-Najar, a former Osama bin Laden bodyguard, was the first prisoner there. CIA interrogators found that after a month of sleep deprivation, he was a "broken man." But the treatment got worse, with officials lowering food rations, shackling him in the cold and giving him a diaper instead of toilet access.

Enhanced interrogation techniques

The Senate's report on the CIA's interrogation program revealed new details, such as the use of forced "rectal rehydration," detainees being forced to stand despite injuries and verbal threats to detainees and their families.


(TS/[redacted]/NF) On July 24, 2002, the attorney general verbally approved the use of 10 interrogation techniques, which included: the attention grasp, walling, the facial hold, the facial slap (insult slap), cramped confinement, wall standing, stress positions, sleep deprivation, use of diapers, and use of insects.[161] The interrogation team, however, indicated that they intended to wait for the approval to use the waterboard before proceeding with their interrogation of Abu Zubaydah. On July 26, 2002, the attorney general verbally approved the use of the waterboard.[162] The OLC finalized its classified written legal opinion on August 1, 2002. The earlier CIA request to conduct a mock burial was not formally considered by the OLC. The approved interrogation techniques, along with other CIA interrogation techniques that were subsequently identified and used by the CIA, are referred to as the CIA's "enhanced interrogation techniques," or more commonly by the CIA as "EITs."
(TS/[redacted]/NF) In April 2003, CIA detainees Abu Hazim and Abd al-Karim each broke a foot while trying to escape capture and were placed in casts.[653] CIA cables requesting the use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques on the two detainees stated that the interrogators would "forego cramped confinement, stress positions, walling, and vertical shackling (due to [the detainees'] injury)."[654] Notwithstanding medical concerns related to the injuries, both of these detainees were subjected to one or more of these CIA enhanced interrogation techniques prior to obtaining CIA Headquarters approval.[655]
At least five CIA detainees were subjected to "rectal rehydration" or rectal feeding without documented medical necessity. The CIA placed detainees in ice water "baths." The CIA led several detainees to believe they would never be allowed to leave CIA custody alive, suggesting to one detainee that he would only leave in a coffin-shaped box.[7] One interrogator told another detainee that he would never go to court, because "we can never let the world know what I have done to you."[8] CIA officers also threatened at least three detainees with harm to their families—to include threats to harm the children of a detainee, threats to sexually abuse the mother of a detainee, and a threat to "cut [a detainee's] mother's throat."[9]

Source: Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Graphic: Tyler Davis, Tribune News Service

Detainee Zubaydah a key figure in Senate report

WASHINGTON (AP)—Abu Zubaydah was the CIA's guinea pig.

He was the first high-profile al Qaida terror suspect captured after the Sept. 11 attacks, and the first to vanish into the spy agency's secret prisons, the first subjected to grinding white noise and sleep deprivation tactics and the first to gasp under the simulated drowning of waterboarding. Zubaydah's stark ordeal became the CIA's blueprint for the brutal treatment of terror suspects, according to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report released Tuesday.

The newly released report cites Zubaydah's detention in Pakistan in March 2002 as a turning point in the Bush administration's no-holds-barred approach to terror suspects and the CIA's development of coercive interrogation tactics.

The United States brutalized scores of terror suspects with interrogation tactics that turned secret CIA prisons into chambers of suffering and did nothing to make America safer after the 9/11 attacks, Senate investigators concluded Tuesday.

The committee report accused the CIA of offering a misleading version about what it was doing with its "black site" captives and deceiving the nation about the effectiveness of its techniques. The report was the first public accounting of tactics employed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and it described far harsher actions than had been widely known.

The tactics employed included confinement to small boxes, weeks of sleep deprivation, simulated drowning, slapping and slamming, and threats to kill, harm or sexually abuse families of the captives. The report catalogued the use of ice baths, death threats, shackling in the cold and much more, including waterboarding. Many detainees developed psychological problems.

Zubaydah

The case of Abu Zubaydah offers a personal view of those experiences.

While CIA officials subjected Zubaydah to a growing array of harsh interrogations, legal officials working for President George W. Bush wrote memos citing Zubaydah as a key test case to justify the extreme measures, the report said.

Zubaydah was waterboarded 83 times in August 2002 alone, according to a previously released Bush-era legal document. The new Senate report said CIA interrogators had a pre-arranged plan about how to dispose of Zubaydah's body if he were to die during questioning: He would be cremated.

The physical effects on the terror suspect were immediate and pronounced. Straining under a waterlogged cloth clamped over his face, Zubaydah became "completely unresponsive, with bubbles rising through his open, full mouth," according to CIA emails cited in the report. He was body-slammed by his captors. He was hooded, then unmasked and ominously shown a coffin-like box. He was locked in a cramped cell, reduced to wailing and hysteria, the report said.

Zubaydah's torment became the template for the CIA's black-site interrogations, the Senate report said. It provided interrogators with reams of data, CIA medical specialists with the limits of human endurance and Bush administration officials with the legal outlines of how they would deal with future terror suspects. At the CIA's request, the report said, top Bush administration Justice Department officials approved the use of waterboarding and other coercive tactics to humble Zubaydah and enshrined a harsh regime that controlled every aspect of his life.

Asia

Suspected bomb kills 10 on PH bus

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The death toll from a suspected bomb explosion on a bus in the southern Philippines rose to at least 10 with another 34 people wounded, officials said Wednesday.

The Rural Transit bus had picked up passengers, mostly students, and was passing near the main gate of Central Mindanao University in Maramag town in Bukidnon province on Tuesday night when the powerful blast sent shrapnel and debris flying through the vehicle, town safety officer Alejandro Navarro said.

The blast killed 10 passengers and wounded 34 others, many of them seriously, police said.

AP

In this photo taken late Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014, and released by the Maramag Police Station of the Philippine National Police, an investigator examines a passenger bus following an explosion at Maramag township, Bukidnon province in southern Philippines.

The suspected explosive, probably a mortar round concealed in a bag, went off in an overheard rack, and many passengers who were standing in the overcrowded bus were wounded in the head, Navarro said.

Investigators were trying to determine the type of blast and were searching for other possible explosives at the site in Maramag, about 860 kilometers (535 miles) southeast of Manila, police officer Rufina Bayarcal said.

Ralph Quilla, a 17-year-old student who was riding on the bus, said by cellphone that the explosion occurred at the back of the vehicle and wounded him in the arm.

"There was a loud explosion that filled the bus with smoke," Quilla said from a hospital where he and other victims were taken for treatment. "I saw bloodied people and jumped out of a window."

Muslim rebels and extortion gangs have been blamed for past bombings on buses in the country's restive south.

Hong Kong police: protest camp shutdown Thursday

HONG KONG (AP)—Police warned Hong Kong pro-democracy activists that they have until Thursday to leave a sprawling protest camp which has blocked traffic in the Chinese financial hub for more than two months.

Authorities are set to move in after a court order authorized the removal of barricades, tents and other obstructions from the protesters' main camp in the downtown Admiralty district, setting the stage for a possible last showdown with activists demanding greater democracy.

Police spokesman Cheung Tak-keung urged protesters on Tuesday evening to start packing up their belongings because they won't have any time on Thursday. Workers are expected to carry out the clearance operation starting at 9 a.m. that day, said Paul Tse, a lawyer for the bus company that sought the injunction.

The court order, published in newspapers and posted by bailiffs Tuesday at the Admiralty site, authorizes court workers to request police assistance "where necessary." It covers three sections of the Admiralty site, but Cheung said that after officers assist in clearing those areas they will also remove obstructions from other blocked roads nearby.

He said police would also dismantle barricades from a second, smaller site in the Causeway Bay district not covered by the court order "at an appropriate time," without specifying when.

Referring to reports that some protesters plan to resist, Cheung said anyone who refuses to leave or obstructs officers will be arrested.

"We will take resolute action against anyone who attempts to block other roads or re-occupy roads that have been reopened," he said.

Some 7,000 police officers will be deployed for the operation, local broadcaster RTHK reported.

The student-led protesters had been occupying three protest sites to press their demands for greater democracy, but authorities shut down one in the rough-and-tumble Mong Kok neighborhood late last month under a separate court order. The aggressive police operation sparked several nights of violent clashes in the neighborhood's tight grid of streets, resulting in about 160 arrests.

Former Chinese economic planner jailed for graft

BEIJING (AP)—A former deputy head of the agency that steers China's state-dominated economy was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison for taking bribes, adding to a growing toll of prominent figures ensnared in a spreading anti-corruption crackdown.

Tienan

Liu Tienan was accused of receiving 36 million yuan ($5.9 million) in bribes from five companies, including petrochemical and auto manufacturers, from 2002 to 2012. Other details were not announced but Liu's post as deputy chairman of the Cabinet's National Development and Reform Commission gave him access to valuable information and influence over policy.

The sentence was the maximum allowed for Liu's offenses despite a recommendation for leniency by prosecutors on the grounds that he confessed at his trial in September. It was announced on the website of the court in the northern city of Langfang and by the official Xinhua News Agency.

Chinese President Xi Jinping launched a campaign in 2012 to purge the Communist Party of corruption and other wrongdoing that threaten to undermine public acceptance of one-party rule.

On Saturday, the party announced Zhou Yongkang, a retired member of its Standing Committee, China's ruling inner circle, had been expelled from the party and arrested on an array of charges including taking bribes and leaking state secrets.

Liu's case was unusual because allegations were first leveled against him by a journalist, Luo Changping, then the deputy editor-in-chief of the business magazine Caijing magazine, on his microblog in December 2012.

Liu also was director of the National Energy Administration, which initially dismissed Luo's allegations as "pure slander."

World

Last French hostage is freed

PARIS (AP)—France's last hostage was freed Tuesday after being held for more than three years by al-Qaida's North Africa branch—rekindling debate over whether countries should negotiate with extremists or stick to a muscular, uncompromising policy that runs the risk of a beheading or a botched rescue attempt.

Lazarevic

French President Francois Hollande announced the "happy news" that 51-year-old Serge Lazarevic had been freed from captivity in Mali, prompting a standing ovation in the National Assembly.

"We no longer have any hostages in any country of the world, and we should not have any," Hollande said.

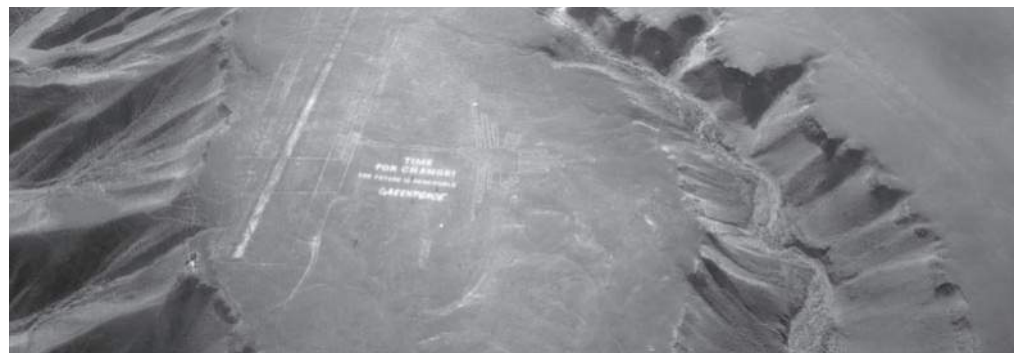
TV images hours later showed a smiling Lazarevic—bald, goateed and 40 pounds (20 kilograms) lighter—as he met with Niger's president. He was to fly to France early Wednesday.

The release stood in sharp contrast to the failed rescue in Yemen last weekend that ended in the deaths of an American journalist and a South African aid worker held by al-Qaida's branch in the Arabian Peninsula.

The announcement immediately raised questions over what concessions the French government made to the extremist group holding Lazarevic, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). France insists it pays no ransoms and does not exchange prisoners, although in September Hollande acknowledged that "other countries have done so, to help us."

But as with numerous French hostage releases in recent years, the story of Lazarevic's release was far from complete. Hollande credited cooperation of the governments of Mali and Niger, but gave no details.

Peru riled by Greenpeace stunt at Nazca lines



AP

Greenpeace activists stand next to massive letters delivering the message "Time for Change: The Future is Renewable" next to the hummingbird geoglyph in Nazca in Peru, Monday, Dec. 8, 2014.

LIMA, Peru (AP)—Peru will seek criminal charges against Greenpeace activists who damaged the world-renowned Nazca lines by leaving footprints in the adjacent desert during a publicity stunt, a senior government official said Tuesday.

"It's a true slap in the face at everything Peruvians consider sacred," Deputy Culture Minister Luis Jaime Castillo said of Monday's action by the environmental group at the famed drawings etched into Peru's coastal desert, a U.N. World Heritage site.

He said the government was seeking to prevent those responsible from leaving the country while it asks prosecutors to file charges of "attacking archaeological monuments," a crime punishable by up to six years in prison.

The activists entered a "strictly prohibited" area beside the famed figure of a hummingbird, the Culture Ministry said in a statement. They laid big yellow cloth letters reading: "Time for Change; The Future is Renewable."

The message was intended for delegates from 190 countries at the U.N. climate talks being held in nearby Lima.

Castillo said no one, not even presidents and Cabinet ministers, is allowed without authorization where the activists trod, and those who do have permission must wear special shoes.

The Nazca lines are huge figures depicting living creatures, stylized plants and imaginary figures scratched on the surface of the ground between 1,500 and 2,000 years ago. They are believed to have had ritual astronomical functions.

"They are absolutely fragile. They are black rocks on a white background. You walk there and the footprint is going to last hundreds or thousands of years," Castillo said. "And the line that they have destroyed is the most visible and most recognized of all."

UN diplomats: Report says Iran buying for reactor

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Iran is being accused of illicitly stepping up purchases for its heavy water reactor, which if completed will produce enough plutonium for several nuclear weapons a year, U.N. diplomats said Tuesday.

What to do with the research reactor, which is under construction in the city of Arak, is among the disagreements between Iran and the U.S. at ongoing talks meant to put long-term curbs on Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

The U.S. and its partners want Iran to agree to re-engineer Arak to a light-water reactor that produces only minuscule amounts of plutonium. The Iranians would rather re-engineer it to produce less plutonium—but that process is reversible, and therefore opposed by the Americans.

The allegation against Iran by an unnamed country, if true, would suggest that Tehran is rejecting the U.S. reconfiguration into a light-water reactor.

The accusation was contained in a report to the Security Council sanctions committee prepared by experts monitoring sanctions against Iran, according to two diplomats familiar with the report. They spoke anonymously because the report hasn't been made public.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said he had no information about the purchase of any new equipment for Arak. "Iran has agreed not to set up new equipment in Arak facility and it has not done so ever since," he said.

The Security Council has imposed four rounds of sanctions against Iran because of concerns it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons and its refusal to suspend enrichment. Tehran claims its nuclear program is peaceful and exists only to produce energy for civilian use.

Environment

A handful of countries contributes most to climate

By DINA CAPPIELLO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP
In this April 3, 2014 file photo, machines dig for brown coal at the open-cast mining Garzweiler in front of a power plant emitting steam near the city of Grevenbroich in western Germany. Six countries produce nearly 60 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. China and the United States combine for more than two-fifths. The planet's future will be shaped by what these top carbon polluters do about the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Six countries produce nearly 60 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. China and the United States combine for more than two-fifths. The planet's future will be shaped by what these top carbon polluters do about the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming.

How they rank, what they're doing:

CHINA

It emits nearly twice the amount of greenhouse gases as the United States, which it surpassed in 2006 as the top emitter of carbon dioxide. China accounts for about 30 percent of global emissions. U.S. government estimates show China doubling its emissions by 2040, barring major changes. Hugely reliant on fossil fuels for electricity and steel production, China until recently was reluctant to set firm targets for emissions, which continue to rise, although at a slower rate. That changed when Beijing announced last month in a deal with Washington that it would stem greenhouse gas emission growth by 2030. About a week later, China's Cabinet announced a coal consumption cap by 2020 at about 62 percent of the energy mix. While politically significant, the U.S.-China deal alone is expected to have little effect on the global thermostat.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 11 billion tons

■ 2013 Population: 1.36 billion

UNITED STATES

It has never entered into a binding treaty to curb greenhouse gases. Nevertheless, it has cut more carbon pollution than any other nation. It is on pace to meet a 2009 Obama administration pledge to reduce emissions 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020. Carbon emissions are up, though, as the U.S. rebounds from recession. President Barack Obama has largely leaned on existing laws, not Congress, to make progress—boosting automobile fuel economy and proposing to reduce carbon pollution from new and existing power plants. The White House vowed in the China deal to double the pace of emissions reductions, lowering carbon pollution 26 percent to 28 percent from 2005 levels by 2025. Expect resistance when Republicans control Congress in January.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 5.8 billion tons

■ 2013 Population: 316 million

INDIA

The U.S.-China agreement puts pressure on the Indian government, which could announce new targets during a planned Obama visit in January. Meantime, India plans to double coal production to feed a power grid still suffering blackouts. Its challenge: to curb greenhouse gases as its population and economy grow. In 2010, India voluntarily committed to a 20 percent to 25 percent cut in carbon emissions relative to economic output by 2020 against 2005 levels. It has made recent strides installing solar power, which it is expected to increase fivefold to 100 gigawatts by 2030. Under current policies, its carbon dioxide emissions will double by then, according to the International Energy Agency.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 2.6 billion tons

■ 2013 population: 1.2 billion

RUSSIA

It never faced mandatory cuts under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol because its emissions fell so much after the Soviet Union collapsed. A major oil and gas producer, Russia in 2013 adopted a domestic greenhouse gas target that would trim emissions 25 percent from 1990 levels by 2020. Russia's carbon dioxide emissions today average 35 percent lower than 1990 levels. To meet its goal, Russia has set a goal for 2020 of boosting energy efficiency 40 percent and expanding renewable energy 4.5 percent. The state-owned gas company Gazprom has energy conservation plans, as has the federal housing program. But in 2006, Russia announced a move to more coal- and nuclear-fired electricity to export more oil and natural gas.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 2 billion tons

■ 2013 population: 143.5 million

JAPAN

The shuttering of its nuclear power plants after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster forced a drastic change in plans to curb carbon pollution. In November, Japanese officials said they would now reduce greenhouse gases 3.8 percent from 2005 levels by 2020. With more fossil fuels in the mix, Japan's emissions will be up 3 percent from 1990 levels, its benchmark for its pledge at a 2009 United Nations summit in Copenhagen to reduce emissions 25 percent. Beginning in 2012, Japan placed a carbon tax based on emissions of fossil fuels, with the proceeds going to renewable energy and energy-saving projects.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 1.4 billion tons

■ 2013 population: 127 million

GERMANY

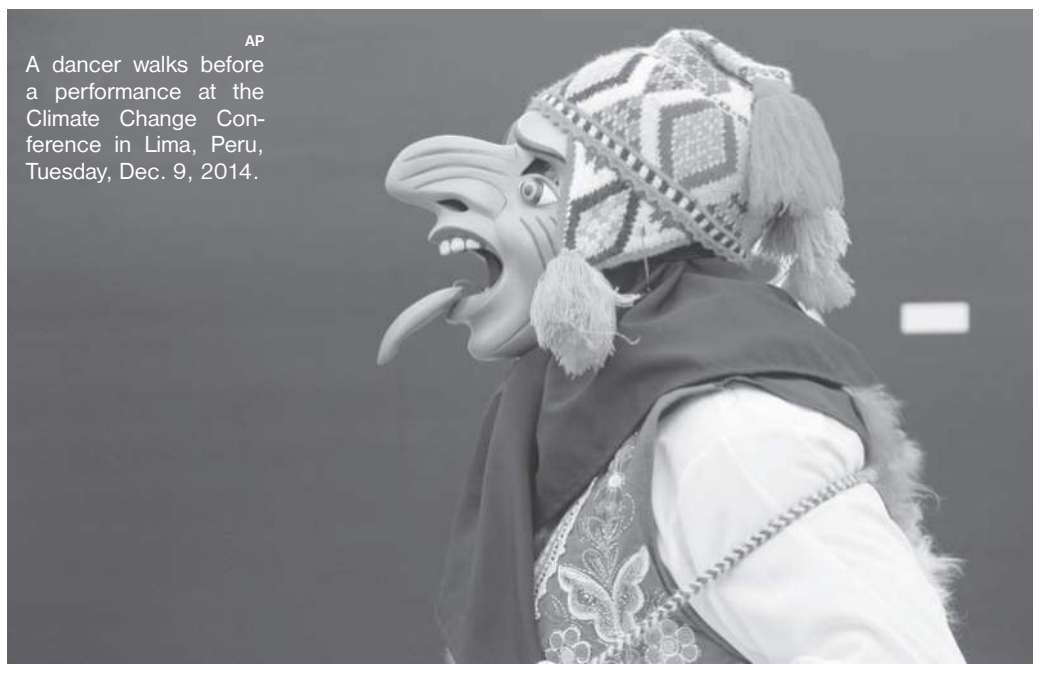
It has outperformed the 21 percent reduction in greenhouse gases it agreed to in 1997. Emissions are down 25 percent against 1990 levels. To comply with 2020 European Union-set goals, Germany must reduce greenhouse gases 40 percent by 2020. On Wednesday, it boosted subsidies for energy efficiency to help it get there. Germany has in recent years seen back-to-back emissions increases due to higher demand for electricity and a switch to coal after Fukushima, which prompted a nuclear power phase-out. Coal use is down this year and renewables continue to gain electricity market share. Renewables already account for a quarter of Germany's electrical production. The country plans to boost that share to 80 percent by 2050—and put a million electric cars on the road by 2020.

■ 2013 CO2 emissions: 836 million tons

■ 2013 population: 80.6 million

Lima climate talks set for record carbon footprint

By FRANK BAJAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS



AP
A dancer walks before a performance at the Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014.

LIMA, Peru (AP)—The current U.N. climate talks will be the first to neutralize all the greenhouse gas pollution they generate, offset by host country Peru's protection of forest reserves, organizers say.

Now the bad news: The Lima conference is expected to have the biggest carbon footprint of any U.N. climate meeting measured to date.

At more than 50,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide, the negotiations' burden on global warming will be about 1 1/2 times the norm, said Jorge Alvarez, project coordinator for the U.N. Development Program.

The venue is one big reason. It had to be built.

Eleven football fields of temporary structures arose for the 13-day negotiations from what three months ago was an empty field behind Peru's army's headquarters. Concrete was laid, plumbing installed, components flown in from as far as France and Brazil.

Standing in the midday sun here can get downright uncomfortable, but the Lima sun is not reliable. That's one reason solar panels were not used.

For electricity, the talks are relying exclusively on diesel generators.

Organizers had planned to draw power from Peru's grid, which is about 52 percent fed by non-polluting hydroelectric power. "We worked to upgrade transformers and generators but for some reason it didn't work," said Alvarez.

Peru's hydroelectric power could be in danger by mid-century, anyway. Much of that water comes from glaciers that are melting at an accelerated pace. Peru is hardly on a green trajectory. Though it emits in a year the greenhouse gases that China spews in three days, it has doubled its carbon output in the past decade.

Nor is there a guarantee that the 580 square miles (1,500 square kilometers) of forest, whose conservation Alvarez said would offset the talks' carbon pollution, won't someday be gone. The Houston, Texas-sized area—in four different forest preserves—must lie unperturbed for a half century in order to neutralize carbon emitted at the conference, Alvarez said.

Environmental economist John M. Reilly of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called that accounting peculiar.

"If this forest is cut down in 50 or 100 years, all of the saved carbon will end up back in the atmosphere," he said.

Life & Style

Joaquin Phoenix's brief 'engagement' on Letterman

NEW YORK (AP)—Chalk up another oddball appearance with David Letterman for actor Joaquin Phoenix, who announced his "engagement" on the CBS late-night host's talk show only to say hours later on Tuesday that it was a joke.

Before he came clean on "Good Morning America," news of Phoenix's supposed impending wedding to his yoga instructor spread widely on several legitimate news sources.

"I can get engaged again if you like," Phoenix told ABC's George Stephanopoulos after telling him he wasn't really ready to get hitched.

Phoenix's oddball appearance on Letterman's "Late Show" in February 2009, punctuated by several moments of uncomfortable silence, became one of late-night TV's first viral videos. Letterman memorably called that session to a close by saying, "I'm sorry you couldn't be here tonight."

By using Letterman's stage to announce a false engagement five years later, was Phoenix enacting a little revenge?

It was "just Joaquin's extraordinary and spontaneous sense of humor," said his spokesman, Susan Patricola.

On the "Late Show" on Monday, Phoenix got down on the stage to demonstrate "the harnessing of the hog," a supposed move his yoga instructor had taught him.

"This is the crazy part of the story," Phoenix said upon returning to Letterman's couch. "We started dating and I think she's the one. I proposed to her and she said yes."

Letterman seemed physically taken aback by the statement, pushing his chair back from his desk.

"You're getting married?" he said.

Yes, said Phoenix, if everything works out.

A few hours after Letterman's appearance had been taped, CBS' press representatives emailed a video clip with the subject line, "Joaquin Phoenix announces engagement on tonight's `Late Show with David Letterman' on CBS!" There was no indication it wasn't serious, and several news organizations, including ABC, Us Weekly and E! Entertainment, did stories.

Letterman said Tuesday: "Not engaged? Fine. Send back the slow-cooker."

Phoenix, who is making publicity rounds for a new movie, shot down the marriage story on "Good Morning America."

"I think, like, my life is so boring, it seemed like it was something exciting to talk about," he said. "I just want the audience to like me and they really like people who are getting married."

AP

In this image released by ABC, actor Joaquin Phoenix appears on "Good Morning America," Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014 in New York.

Sting joins his show 'The Last Ship' on Broadway

AP

Sting appears at the curtain call following his debut performance in Broadway's "The Last Ship" on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014 in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Grammy Award-winner Sting jumped aboard his Broadway musical "The Last Ship" as its newest star Tuesday night, hoping to help right a show that's been listing dangerously at the box office.

A bearded Sting got a standing ovation—and a bouquet of white roses—at the Neil Simon Theatre after playing the role of a foreman in the musical. He took no special bow, choosing to stay in line with the ensemble as the clapping grew deafening.

"It's a play. It's supposed to be fun and it's great fun," Sting said afterward. "The audience were so with us. They were so buoyant. The cast, too. It was a wonderful experience."

"The Last Ship" is a semi-autobiographical story about a prodigal son who returns to his northern England shipbuilding town to reclaim the girl he abandoned when he fled years before. He finds the workers are now unemployed and entertaining the idea of building one last boat to show off their skill and pride.

The show, with no bankable stars until now, has struggled at the box office, attributable in part to its challenging topic. Sting hopes he can help raise both awareness and the weekly take to $625,000 a week, which would put it in the black. Last week it made only $492,000.

"I had no intention of going in when I was writing it, but I wanted to help the show out. It's hard to put on a new musical on Broadway, as many shows will tell you," Sting said. "We had a secret weapon and we used it."

Producer Jeffrey Seller said that though Sting is an ensemble player in an ensemble show, he's done two things: "He has given the audience enough of his own unique gifts to please them and satisfy them. And he has also lifted up the whole evening, emotionally."

Since word of Sting's arrival, Seller said the show quickly raised $1 million. "That's manna from heaven," he said. "We're going to make real money this week and for every week he's in the play, I hope. And then we'll take it from there."

The move isn't unprecedented. Green Day's frontman Billie Joe Armstrong made several onstage visits to his show "American Idiot." But U2's The Edge and Bono or Phish frontman Trey Anastasio chose not to join their leaky ships.

Sixteen-time Grammy winner Sting, born Gordon Sumner, drew on his childhood, growing up in Newcastle to help create the story. He was last onstage on Broadway in 1989's revival of "The Threepenny Opera," and "The Last Ship" marks his debut as a musical composer.

Sting took over the foreman's role from Jimmy Nail, a well-known singer, actor and producer in the U.K. In the show, the soft-hearted foreman with a gruff exterior helps lead the workers to finish their ship.

Nail was in the audience Tuesday and called the experience "absolutely extraordinary." It was the first time he'd actually seen the final product since he's been onstage with it each time. "I can't tell you how proud I am that my name is associated with it," he said.

How did Sting do in his old role? "I felt like an expectant father in a delivery room," Nail said. "Each time he went to do a song, it felt like one of the contractions. But I'm just so proud of him."

The $15 million project began as a CD and PBS concert special before it was turned into a stage version for a pre-Broadway stop in Chicago this summer. Pulitzer Prize and Tony-winning lyricist Brian Yorkey ("Next to Normal") and Tony-winner John Logan ("Red") wrote the book, and Tony-winner Joe Mantello ("Wicked") directs.

The cast album comes out Dec. 16.

At 84, Rowlands dances back onscreen in 'Lessons'

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Don't get Gena Rowlands started on the bulk of film roles she gets offered these days: a lot of grumpy and ill-fated old women.

"I can say, for sure, I die," the actress noted, smiling. "But I have had some really great parts, too."

Indeed, the 84-year-old veteran's resume includes two Oscar nominations earned while working with her late husband, actor-director John Cassavetes — first for their 1974 indie classic "A Woman Under the Influence" and again for the 1980 crime drama "Gloria."

A new generation of filmgoers was introduced to Rowlands as the elderly version of the Rachel McAdams character in the 2004 romantic-drama blockbuster "The Notebook," directed by Rowlands' son, Nick Cassavetes.

In "Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks," opening this weekend, Rowlands is Lily Harrison, a sharp-tongued septuagenarian who gets more than she bargained for after hiring a private dance instructor, portrayed by Cheyenne Jackson.

AP

In this Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014 photo, actress Gena Rowlands poses for a portrait at the London West Hollywood hotel in West Hollywood, Calif.

Rowlands said she wasn't much of a dancer at the start of shooting the film adaptation of the stage play, but learned enough to get by from Broadway veteran Jackson ("Xanadu").

And Rowlands returned the favor, offering her co-star advice about acting. Recalled Jackson: "We were talking about close-ups, and I had to do a monologue and was kind of in my head about it and she said, `If you think it, the camera will see it.'"

Added Rowlands: "You know John Cassavetes did the same thing for me. I was stuck on one of the first pictures that he and I did together and I couldn't quite get it. I said, `John, would you give me a hint about this?' He said, `I wrote the script and I wrote it with you in mind. And you read it.' And he said, `You do it. Now do it!' That's the best advice I ever had."

Rowland's award wins including four Emmys and two Golden Globes, and last week, she was honored with a handprint ceremony in front of Hollywood's Chinese Theatre.

Looking back on her career, Rowlands said, "I just think the really wonderful thing about acting is that you get to lead so many lives. You don't just have to get stuck with your own life, even if you like your own life. Every part you play opens part of the world to you, and you can't help but understand more things than when you started."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Former Miss America Mary Ann Mobley dies at 75

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A former Miss America who went on to appear in movies with Elvis Presley and make documentary films around the world has died. A spokesman for the University of Mississippi confirms Mary Ann Mobley Collins died Tuesday in Beverly Hills, California. She was 75. Danny Blanton of Ole Miss says Collins was close friends with a former chancellor of the university. She graduated from Ole Miss in 1958, the same year she won the Miss America crown. She became an actress a few years later, with credits including such TV shows as "General Hospital" and "Perry Mason," and films such as "Girl Happy" with Presley and "Three on a Couch" with Jerry Lewis. It was on that film she met her husband, actor Gary Collins, who died in 2012.

Kanye, Usher Phylicia Rashad to get BET Honors

NEW YORK (AP)—Someone other than Kanye West is confirming his visionary status. The superstar rapper will receive the Visionary Award next month at the BET Honors. West—who has called himself a visionary and more—will be one of five luminaries honored at the eighth annual event hosted by Wayne Brady. Usher will receive the Musical Arts Award for his two-decade career; Phylicia Rashad will receive the Theatrical Arts Award. Johnnetta Betsch Cole, director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art and former president of Spelman College, will receive the Education Award. Microsoft Chairman John W. Thompson will receive the Technology and Business Award. The BET Honors will be taped Jan. 24 in Washington and will air Feb. 23. Ticket sales will benefit the National CARES Mentoring Program. Past honorees include Maya Angelou and Whitney Houston.

'Selma' nominated for US 8 Image Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The civil rights drama "Selma" led all films Tuesday when it collected eight nominations for the NAACP Image Awards. The movie earned nods for outstanding motion picture; lead actor for David Oyelowo; supporting actor for Andre Holland, Common and Wendell Pierce; supporting actress for Carmen Ejogo and Oprah Winfrey; and director for Ava DuVernay. Other films nominated for outstanding motion picture were "Belle," ''Beyond the Lights," ''Dear White People" and "Get On Up." The civil rights group's 46th annual awards show will be presented during a Feb. 6 ceremony airing live on the TV One channel. The awards honor diversity in the arts. Viola Davis was the most nominated performer with three nods for her work in the films "The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby" and "Get On Up," and the TV series "How to Get Away with Murder."

Irish singer Sinead O'Connor joining Sinn Fein

DUBLIN (AP)—Sinead O'Connor, long a critic of church and state in Ireland, says she's joining the Irish nationalist Sinn Fein party—and wants its leaders to step aside for younger voices free of IRA connections. The 48-year-old singer, who recently released her 10th album "I'm Not Bossy, I'm the Boss," says Sinn Fein is the only left-wing party able to steer Ireland toward social equality. But O'Connor says senior figures Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, who oversaw the outlawed Irish Republican Army, should retire. The 66-year-old Adams has led Sinn Fein since 1983. She told Facebook followers: "There'd be a zillion percent increase in membership of Sinn Fein if the leadership were handed over to those born from 1983-1985 onward and no one associated in people's minds with frightful things."

Joan Rivers' will leaves money for charities

NEW YORK (AP)—Joan Rivers' left her daughter, Melissa, in charge of her fortune and left money for some of her favorite charities, including Guide Dogs for the Blind, Jewish Guild Healthcare and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

According to Rivers' 2014 will, which was filed in New York State Surrogate's Court, the late comedienne made Melissa Rivers her will's executor with "the broadest and most absolute permissible direction" over a fortune that has been estimated as high as $150 million.

Other charities she singled out were the New York-based food pantry God's Love We Deliver, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Jewish Home and Hospital Foundation in Manhattan.

Rivers died Sept. 4 at 81 of brain damage due to lack of oxygen. She'd stopped breathing during an endoscopy days earlier.

The late comedienne asked that her business manager Michael D. Karlin and interior designer Robert Higdon be named co-executors of the living trust. Specifics of her assets and how they will be divided haven't been disclosed.

Bequests were made to her assistants, Sabrina Lott and Jocelyn Pickett, her publicist Scott Currie, and Rivers' niece and nephew, Caroline Waxler and Andrew Waxler.

AP

This Oct. 5, 2009 file photo shows Joan Rivers during the 25th International Film and Programme Market for TV, Video, Cable and Satellite, in Cannes, southeastern France.

Man gets jail for taking part from Paul Walker car

SAN FERNANDO, Calif. (AP)—A man who stole part of the Porsche that "Fast and the Furious" actor Paul Walker died in has been sentenced to six months in jail.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office says 26-year-old Anthony Janow was sentenced Tuesday in Southern California.

Walker

Walker and driver Roger Rodas died in November 2013 when their speeding Porsche Carrera GT hit a tree and a light pole in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita.

Prosecutors say Janow and a friend stole a roof panel when a tow truck carrying the wreckage stopped at a red light.

Janow and 19-year-old Jameson Witty each pleaded no contest to grand theft, destroying evidence and obstructing a peace officer.

Witty was sentenced earlier this year to six months in jail.

Passage on assault to be clarified in Dunham book

NEW YORK (AP)—A section from Lena Dunham's "Not That Kind of Girl" that recounts an alleged assault while she was in college is being changed to make clear that the assailant's name is a pseudonym.

Random House announced Tuesday that both the digital edition and future print editions of Dunham's best-selling memoir will include the clarification. The book already included a disclaimer saying that some names and details had been changed, but did not say precisely that "Barry" was not the real name of Denham's alleged assailant.

The publisher's announcement comes after an article last week from the conservative news site http://www.breitbart.com that challenged Dunham's story that she was attacked by a campus Republican. Breitbart reported that Dunham had an Oberlin classmate named "Barry" but neither he nor anyone else fully matched the description Dunham gave in the book.

In a statement issued Tuesday night through Buzzfeed, Dunham apologized for any discomfort the use of the pseudonym may have caused a former classmate.

"'Barry' is a pseudonym, not the name of the man who assaulted me, and any resemblance to a person with this name is an unfortunate and surreal coincidence. I am sorry about all he has experienced," Dunham wrote.

"Speaking out was never about exposing the man who assaulted me. Rather, it was about exposing my shame, letting it dry out in the sun. I did not wish to be contacted by him or to open a criminal investigation."

US police suspect rapper shot, killed wife, self

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles police say a rapper apparently shot and killed his TV actress wife and himself at a Los Angeles apartment.

Police say the bodies discovered Monday morning are those of 34-year-old Earl Warren Hayes and 30-year-old Stephanie Elyse Moseley.

Hayes was a rapper and an acquaintance of professional boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Moseley was a dancer and actress who appeared in the VH1 cheerleader drama "Hit the Floor."

Police say they went to the apartment complex after neighbors reported shots being fired and a woman screaming.

Officers heard more shots and called in a special weapons and tactics team, which found the couple dead.

There's no word yet on a motive.

Community theater provides stage for couple's love story

DEAR ABBY: You sometimes print letters from people who are looking to meet decent, honorable and interesting other people. While you have recommended volunteering, joining health clubs, going to church — and staying out of bars — something I have yet to see mentioned is a community-based arts organization.

Someone who is musically inclined might look for a local band, orchestra or community chorus. But I'd like to put in a word for community theater. A person doesn't have to be a performer; these groups need people to build sets, make costumes, locate props, run the backstage operations during a performance, etc. In the front of the house, they need people for promotion, selling tickets, ushering and soliciting donations from sponsors.

I met my husband of 30-plus years through a community theater group, and know of several other long-term marriages that came about the same way. I'm a seamstress, so I have made my share of costumes. But I have also learned how to frame a wall and build a staircase while working on set construction.

Even if you don't find that special someone, you will make dozens of new friends and have the satisfaction of accomplishing something at the same time.

ALWAYS BUSY IN DES MOINES

DEAR ALWAYS BUSY: I love your suggestion. Not everyone is meant to be in front of the footlights, but that doesn't mean one can't be an important member of the team. And community theater is definitely a team effort.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I find my wife's daughter and son-in-law, who live nearby, to be very unlikable. Her daughter is gossipy, arrogant, smug and superficial. The husband is ill-mannered, devoid of social skills, lazy, impossible to carry on a normal conversation with and, worst of all, a liar.

Naturally, I am expected to see them often, and the more I am around them, the less I like them. This has become apparent to my wife. We have had more than a few "spirited discussions" about it, which I view as a real threat to the long-term well-being of our marriage.

I have tried mightily for her sake to overlook their major personality and character flaws, with no success. I don't want another divorce. Please help.

DESPERATE IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

DEAR DESPERATE: If you love your wife and don't want this marriage ruined, accept that you are going to have to accommodate to some degree her insufferable daughter and son-in-law. This does not mean you must love them or even enjoy their company. It does mean working out a compromise that includes spending some time with them.

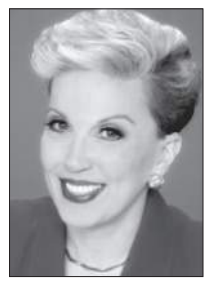
You and your wife are not joined at the hip. Every visit doesn't have to include you. Take up some hobbies you can enjoy on your own. Develop a sense of humor where they are concerned. If you do, you won't force your wife to choose between you and her child, because the chances are you would lose.

■■■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

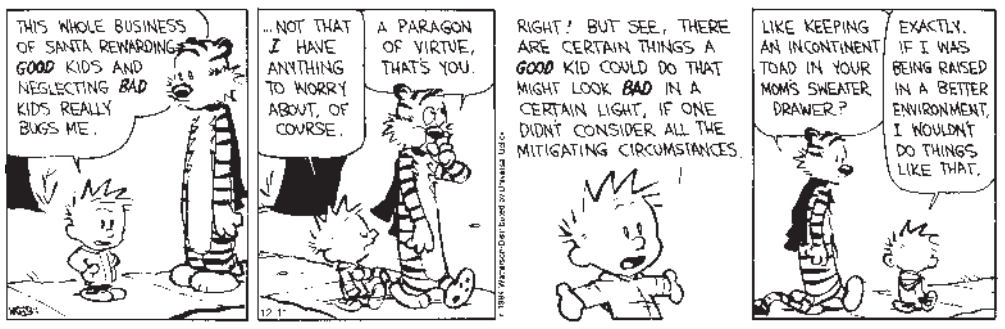


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THIS WHOLE BUSINESS OF SANTA REWARDING GOOD KIDS AND NEGLECTING BAD KIDS REALLY BUGS ME.
...NOT THAT I HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, OF COURSE.
A PARAGON OF VIRTUE, THAT'S YOU.
RIGHT! BUT SEE, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS A GOOD KID COULD DO THAT MIGHT LOOK BAD IN A CERTAIN LIGHT, IF ONE DIDN'T CONSIDER ALL THE MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.
LIKE KEEPING AN INCONTINENT TOAD IN YOUR MOM'S SWEATER DRAWER?
EXACTLY. IF I WAS BEING RAISED IN A BETTER ENVIRONMENT, I WOULDN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

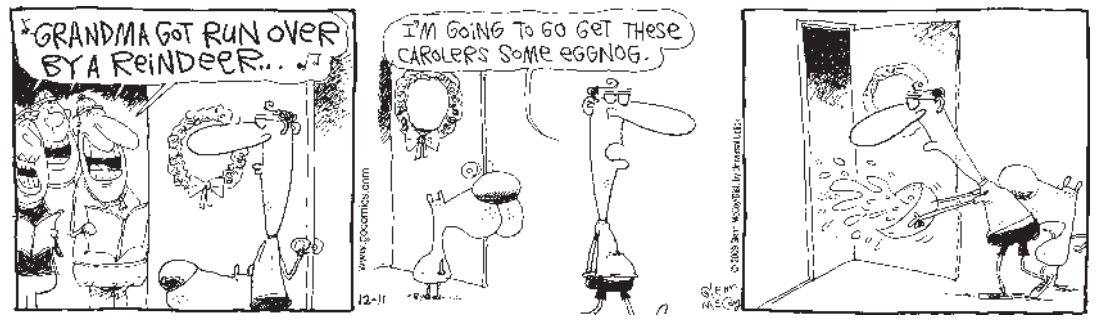
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?
HOW'S YOUR ENERGY?
MY... I'M A LITTLE TIRED. BUT I'M OKAY.
YOU'VE GOT TWO MORE WEEKS OF THIS, SANTA!
YOU CAN'T GET RUN DOWN BEFORE THE BIG NIGHT. I WORRY ABOUT YOU.
THAT'S SWEET.
HERE'S A RED BULL AND SOME NUCLEAR COFFEE. I NEED YOU SHARP, BIG GUY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

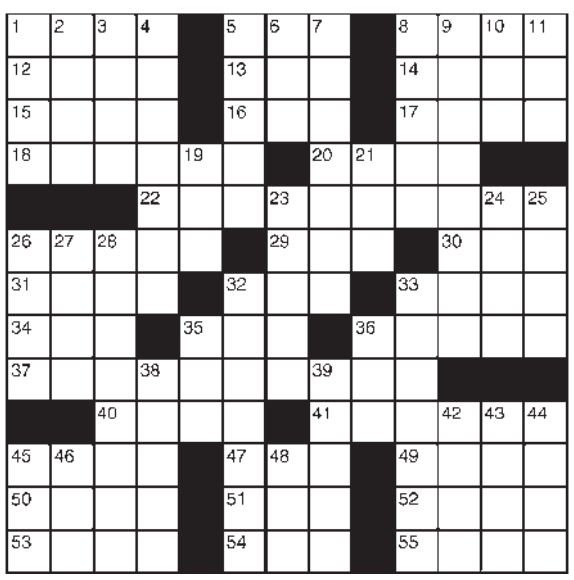
ACROSS
1 Senate staffer
5 Japanese sash
8 Agile
12 Hollywood clashers
13 Convent dweller
14 Genealogy chart
15 Gator's cousin
16 Pompous one
17 "My bad"
18 Jungle expedition
20 Office part-timer
22 USPS option
26 Mend anew
29 Easter entree
30 Witness
31 Analgesic target
32 Foundation
33 Anger
34 Bashful
35 "Gosh!"
36 Criminal
37 Analysis of a recent event
40 Dissolve
41 Vacationer's car, often
45 Boxer Max
47 Part of N.A.
49 Met melody
50 Shrek, for one
51 Mainlander's memento
52 "I Remember Mama" role
53 Sit for a snapshot
54 Corpulent
55 Pitch

DOWN
1 Chest muscles, for short
2 Taj Mahal city
3 Blunder
4 Jailbreak participant
5 How the elated walk
6 Clear the tables
7 As a replacement
8 Tread not so lightly
9 Offer
10 Agt.
11 "Absolutely"
19 Uncooked
21 Shade provider
23 Root
24 Lily variety
25 Adolescent
26 Grate
27 Reverberate
28 Ambulance chasers, e.g.
32 Grendel's slayer
33 Vestige
35 "Today" rival, for short
36 Doc's due
38 Crowd quorum?
39 Characteristic
42 Early smartphone
43 Has a bug
44 Glasgow gal
45 Jazz style
46 Past
48 Vast expanse

Solution time: 25 mins.

		C	A	M			B	O	Y			
	L	O	L	A		L	E	V	E	R		
H	A	V	E	N		A	Z	A	L	E	A	
A	L	E	X	A	N	D	E	R	P	O	P	E
M	A	Y		G	U	L	_	Y		P	R	O
			P	E	L	E			L	E	O	N
	W	H	I	R	L		D	J	.	N	N	
B	O	O	T			E	R	I	E			
B	L	M		S	C	R	A	G		H	O	P
S	L	I	P	P	E	R	Y	S	L	O	P	E
	D	E	R	I	D	E		A	O	R	T	A
		R	A	C	E	D		W	U	S	S	
			M	E	D			S	_	Y		

Yesterday's answer 12-11



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hailee Steinfeld, 18; Mos Def, 41; Mo'Nique, 47; Jermaine Jackson, 60.

Happy Birthday: Invite new beginnings and welcome opportunity with open arms. Don't deny yourself the chance to mingle with the movers and the shakers. It's your turn to grow spiritually, financially and emotionally. Be the instigator and bring about change by incorporating new ideas and methods into your everyday routine. This is a year of positive change that will require relentless effort. Your numbers are 1, 5, 12, 21, 28, 37, 40.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Success is within reach. Don't let anyone you work with cost you the chance to advance. Ignore what others do and focus on doing your best, voicing your expertise and rising above any competition you face. Push for positive results. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Listen and learn. You stand to make a difference and to enjoy meeting someone new if you participate in a cause or concern that interests you. Short trips or long-distance communication will help you get to the bottom of a puzzling situation. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take a position of authority and act accordingly. It's your actions that will make a difference. Form a partnership with someone who will help you improve your life and strive for greater satisfaction, happiness and peace of mind. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't slow down when there is so much to do. Let your mind wander and your imagination take over, and you will masterfully find ways to make improvements, diversify your talents and get ahead using your skills, wit and past experience. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Plan a get-together. Reuniting with old friends will bring back fond memories as well as heartaches and opportunities to relive an old dream or revive a goal. Changing your surroundings or participating in something you enjoy should be highlighted. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Protect your reputation and stick to the rules. Not everyone will be on your side, so make sure you have all your facts straight. A romantic relationship can bring you joy if you offer your partner something unique. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take on whatever comes your way. You don't want to be considered lazy or disinterested. Use your ability to express your thoughts in detail and with eloquence, and you will mesmerize someone who will fight on your behalf. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Use a little muscle to push what you want into play. A creative idea should be developed and presented. A small, home-based business will bring in extra cash. Romance will improve your day and enhance your relationship. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You can make a difference. A change in lifestyle will help you bring about a new beginning. Express your interests and engage in emotional banter that will coax someone special to engage in your plans. Change will bring worthwhile benefits. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): A financial deal looks good, but do your due diligence before taking on an expense you cannot afford. A joint venture will be based on false information. A mistake from the past should help you make a wiser choice now. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Partnerships are blooming, and positive change regarding how you earn your living is coming into play. Do your best to network and present what you have to offer. Articulate your feelings clearly to ensure your success. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Say little and observe a lot. Stability should be your intent. It's important not to act on impulse or feel obligated to make a decision before you have had time to gather the pertinent facts. Be smart, not sorry. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a team player. You are lucky, capable and unstoppable.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1		4	3				
					2	8		6
	7				6			
	3	5		2				1
6								5
8				4		6	2	
			5				7	
7		2	9					
				7	1		3	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	6	9	4	1	3	2	8	7
8	4	2	7	5	6	3	9	1
1	7	3	8	2	9	6	4	5
2	1	6	9	8	4	5	7	3
4	5	8	2	3	7	9	1	6
3	9	7	5	6	1	8	2	4
9	3	5	1	4	2	7	6	8
7	8	4	6	9	5	1	3	2
6	2	1	3	7	8	4	5	9

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/11

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE ORGANETTO **Solution: 9 letters**

D	E	L	B	E	R	T	B	S	U	T	O	A	T	T
E	S	A	C	B	S	P	U	O	R	G	R	E	A	E
E	S	N	M	E	L	O	D	Y	E	I	G	R	M	A
R	A	E	C	L	Ⓦ	Ⓞ	Ⓛ	Ⓕ	N	S	A	O	R	C
D	B	E	V	L	L	U	P	C	O	N	N	P	O	H
W	I	N	D	O	E	P	I	P	T	N	S	H	F	T
P	L	A	Y	W	M	T	R	E	T	E	N	O	R	O
D	N	U	O	S	A	A	L	S	X	D	G	N	I	S
S	I	Z	E	L	N	L	W	T	N	O	N	E	C	K
R	C	A	I	O	A	O	E	S	M	O	T	I	O	N
O	E	A	T	D	R	N	H	W	T	W	T	S	S	E
L	N	A	L	O	D	A	O	E	E	R	F	T	T	P
O	N	O	D	E	N	H	S	U	P	O	R	A	U	O
C	H	O	R	D	S	I	E	V	L	A	V	L	N	B
S	T	R	E	C	N	O	C	K	P	B	O	F	E	X

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Aerophone, Bass, Bellows, Buttons, Case, Chord, Close, Colors, Concerts, Dance, Diatonic, Extend, Flats, Flow, Folk, Format, Free, Groups, Hold, Italian, Melody, Motion, Moves, Neck, Notes, Open, Organs, Pairs, Piece, Pipe, Play, Pull, Push, Read, Reed, Rows, Scale, Shand, Show, Sing, Size, Soprano, Sound, Strap, Tarantella, Teach, Tenor, Tone, Treble, Tune, Valve, Wind, Wooden

Yesterday's Answer: Huntington

Treasury 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18 can be purchased online in time for the holidays at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 130 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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2-Maintenance & Repair Worker, 4-House worker & 3-Bookkeeper. $6.05/hour. Interested applicants, mail resume to MTO Maintenance at P.O. Box 504053, Saipan MP 96950

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Interested qualified applicants can submit their resume and latest police clearance via e-mail to saipan@aicconstruction.com or mail to AIC Marianas, Inc., PMB 564 PPP Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950. Closing date: December 11, 2014.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

2 – HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

High school diploma with (5) years minimum work related experience. Able to operate various heavy equipment including but not limited to Backhoe/Loader, Compactor, Tractor/Trailer Combo, Bulldozer, Hydraulic Crane and Grader. Crane operator must be able to pass required crane certification exam. Must understand load weights and check them against lifting capacities to prevent overload and have full knowledge of how to operate cranes, or other moving equipment for lifting, moving, or placing loads. Learn and follow safety regulations. Take actions to avoid potential hazards or obstructions, such as utility lines, other equipment, other workers, or falling objects. Clean, lubricate and inspect mechanisms or accessories such as cables, pulleys, or grappling devices to prevent malfunctions or damage. Perform routine maintenance of equipment. Must have knowledge in troubleshooting and able to diagnose problem or malfunction and make repairs as necessary.

Interested qualified applicants can submit their resume and latest police clearance via e-mail to saipan@aicconstruction.com or mail to AIC Marianas, Inc., PMB 564 PPP Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950. Closing date: December 11, 2014.

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- Certification in Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- Flexible with time schedule

Interested applicants must submit a resume or pick up an application at St. Jude Renal Care Facility, Inc., at Chalan Kiya, Saipan. Deadline to submit an application will be on 12/26/2014 at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call our HR Office at (670) 234-2901 ext. 128.

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Lester, Cubs agree to $155M, 6-year deal

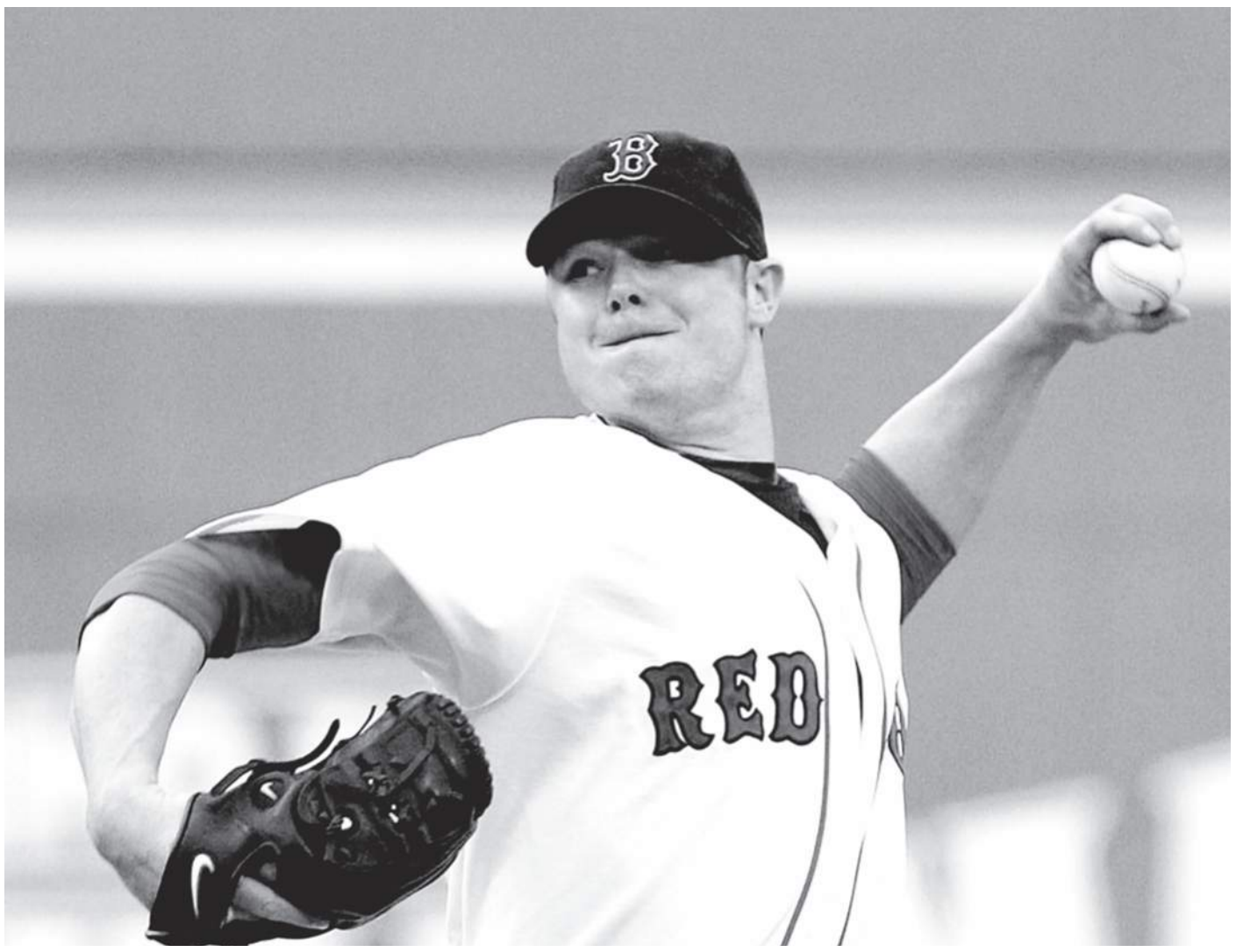
SAN DIEGO (AP)—Pitcher Jon Lester agreed Tuesday night to a $155 million, six-year contract with the Cubs, the first big deal of the offseason involving a top-level starting pitcher and one Chicago hopes will help end more than a century of frustration at Wrigley Field's Friendly Confines.

Lester's contract, agreed to on the second day of baseball's winter meetings, contains an option for 2021 that, if it becomes guaranteed, would make the deal worth $170 million over seven seasons. The average annual value of $25.8 million is the second-highest for a pitcher behind Clayton Kershaw's $30.7 million as part of a $215 million, seven-year deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers that began this year.

"It's not often you get to win the lottery, and we won the baseball lottery this year," new Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "Now it's up to us to put it into effect."

A three-time All-Star who turns 31 next month, Lester won two World Series titles with Boston. The left-hander joins a long-suffering team with a promising core of young players and a top-tier manager Maddon, who left Tampa Bay and signed a $25 million, five-year contract with the Cubs. Now, Chicago has an ace to lead the rotation as it tries to end a run of five straight losing seasons and a championship drought that dates to 1908.

Lester was dealt by the Red Sox to Oakland at the trade deadline in July and helped the A's reach the playoffs for the third straight year before a 9-8, 12-inning loss to Kansas City in the AL wild-card game. He went 16-11 with a career-best 2.46 ERA and 220 strikeouts last season and is 116-67 with a 3.58 ERA in nine big league seasons.



Pitcher Jon Lester agreed Tuesday night to a $155 million, six-year contract with the Cubs.

Lester is headed to a team that hasn't made the playoffs since 2008, but he knows Cubs president of baseball operations Theo Epstein and general manager Jed Hoyer from their time together in Boston.

Maddon had been used to small payrolls in Tampa Bay.

"I've not been on this side since my days with the Angels, when I got an email in Italy that we had signed Vldamir Guerrero," said Maddon, who was a coach in Anaheim before switching to Tampa Bay. "I think that definitely sends that message how Theo and the group feel about this particular group. But understand, we have a lot of young players that have to grow up as quickly as possible. But having Jon there adds to the flavor and the possibility."

The Cubs' management is making over the team in a big way.

Chicago has a pending $20 million, two-year deal with right-hander Jason Hammel, traded by the Cubs to Oakland last summer. Earlier Tuesday, Chicago acquired All-Star catcher Miguel Montero from Arizona for minor league right-handers Jeferson Mejia and Zack Godley—a deal that added $40 million in salary to the Cubs' payroll over the next three years.

Chicago's rotation is likely to also include Jake Arrieta, Travis Wood, and Kyle Hendricks.

The Cubs also have a pair of All-Stars in the batting order in first baseman Anthony Rizzo and shortstop Starlin Castro and expect improved performances from young sluggers Javier Baez and Jorge Soler. Ahead is another wave of prospects that includes third baseman Kris Bryant and shortstop Addison Russell.

Maddon hopes an addition such as Lester helps change the mindset in the clubhouse when spring training starts in February,

"It definitely makes it more believable to everybody else in that room," he said. "I'll stand up and make the same speech regardless, but when you have it backed up by that particular kind of presence, it adds to it."

Liriano, Pirates reach deal

A person familiar with the negotiations says Francisco Liriano is staying with the Pittsburgh Pirates, agreeing to a $39 million, three-year contract.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the agreement had not been announced.

The 31-year-old left-hander joined the Pirates for the 2013 season and went 16-8 with a 3.02 ERA. He dropped to 7-10 with a 3.38 ERA this season.

Liriano reached a tentative $14 million, two-year contract with Pittsburgh in December 2012, then injured his non-throwing arm. He earned $3,125,000 with the Pirates in 2013 and $8 million this year under a team option.

Panthers' Newton suffers back fractures in crash

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Panthers quarterback Cam Newton suffered fractures to his lower back in a two-car crash Tuesday and will spend the night in the hospital, a team spokesman said Tuesday.

Newton was in fair condition, had no other internal injuries and would not need surgery, team spokesman Charlie Dayton said during a news conference outside a Charlotte hospital. It was unclear if Newton would be able to practice or play Sunday against the Buccaneers, Dayton said.

"Right now we have thought about Cam's well-being and we understand there was someone else in the other car who was injured," Dayton said. "We just hope that they're all OK."

He was expected to be released from the hospital on Wednesday after undergoing tests.

Television footage showed Newton on a stretcher being placed in an ambulance after the crash. Photos from The Charlotte Observer showed the 25-year-old smiling as an officer attended to him on the ground.

A black pickup truck that Charlotte-Mecklenburg police spokesman Robert Tufano said Newton was driving was overturned on the roadway with debris scattered all over the street. The roof was caved in and a tow truck later was hauling it away. Another car that appeared to be involved in the crash had front end damage.

Police were investigating how the crash happened on a bridge that crosses busy I-277 in the shadow of Bank of America Stadium, where the Panthers play. Dayton said he believes Newton was on his way to the stadium but wasn't certain.

The two-time Pro Bowler has 2,800 yards passing this season with 16 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He also has rushed for 425 yards and 3 touchdowns to lead the Panthers to a 4-8-1 record.

An Atlanta native, Newton led the Auburn Tigers to a national championship in 2010.

Dayton said Newton had two transverse process fractures in his lower back, which is the same description of an injury that Dallas quarterback Tony Romo has and has been playing through it.

Dayton said Panthers owner Jerry Richardson stopped to visit Newton, but was unable to see the quarterback because he was undergoing tests. Richardson left to attend the league meetings in Dallas.

As word of the accident spread online, NFL players started sending good wishes on social media. "Praying for (at)CameronNewton," Oakland Raiders defensive end Justin Tuck tweeted.

Newton threw three touchdown passes in Carolina's 41-10 win over the New Orleans Saints on Sunday, his best game in nearly a month-and-a-half. He also broke a string of eight straight games with an interception.

The win put the Panthers back in the playoff hunt, one-half game behind the Atlanta Falcons and New Orleans Saints (both 5-8).

Newton was the No. 1 overall pick in the 2011 NFL draft and was the franchise's starter right away. He has only missed one game this season, the opener at Tampa Bay. Newton has one year left on his rookie contract after the Panthers picked up a $15 million option for 2015.

The Panthers have repeatedly said Newton is a guy they view as their franchise quarterback moving forward.

But it has been a rough year for Newton.

After the Panthers fell at home to the San Francisco 49ers in the NFC divisional playoffs in January, Newton had ankle surgery in March that sidelined him for all but one of the team's spring practices.

He returned for the start of the training camp, but then suffered another setback when he fractured his ribs during a preseason game against the New England Patriots.

The injuries forced Newton to miss Carolina's season opener.

He has said he's not been close to 100 percent all season.

Newton is 23-31-1 as an NFL starter in the regular season and 0-1 in the playoffs.

Derek Anderson is the team's backup quarterback and would be first in line to replace Newton if he is unable to play Sunday against Tampa Bay (2-10). Anderson started and led Carolina to a season-opening victory against the Bucs.

US faces brutal schedule in 2015

CHICAGO (AP)—The U.S. will play exhibition games next spring at Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany as it prepares to defend its title at the CONCACAF Gold Cup.

The Americans announced six exhibition games for the first half of the year on Tuesday. They open the year Jan. 28 at Chile, and then host Panama on Feb. 8 at Carson, California, in a pair of matches before the Major League Soccer season. The games are not on FIFA calendar dates, so most Europe-based players likely will not be available.

The U.S. plays at Denmark on March 27 and at Switzerland four days later, both on FIFA dates. In a game likely to feature players primarily from MLS, the Americans host Mexico on April 15 at a site to be announced.

In two more games before the Gold Cup, the Americans are at the Netherlands on June 5, and then play Germany five days later in Cologne.

The Gold Cup takes place from July 7-26. If the U.S. wins, it will play in the 2017 Confederations Cup. If the Americans fail to win, they will meet the 2015 champion in a playoff for a Confederations Cup berth.

The taxing schedule is all by design as Klinsmann wants to challenge his troops in preparation for the 2015 Gold Cup, If the U.S. wins the tournament, it will earn a trip to the 2017 Confederations Cup in Russia, avoiding a one-game playoff to determine CONCACAF's representative.

"We want to consistently benchmark ourselves against the top teams in the world, and to give new and different challenges to our players," Klinsmann said in a press release. "Competition gives your team an opportunity to grow, and this schedule allows us to do that."

After the annual January training camp, which is expected to continue a focus on young prospects, the Americans will kick off 2015 on January 28 in Chile against La Roja, ranked 14th in the world.

Kobe scores 32 to rally Lakers past Kings

AP

Sacramento Kings' Derrick Williams, top right, is defended by Los Angeles Lakers' Jeremy Lin, bottom right, Ed Davis, center, and Jordan Hill during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014, in Los Angeles. The Lakers won, 98-95.

LOS ANGELES—Even when his legs are shot and his whole body is exhausted, Kobe Bryant can figure out ways to will the Los Angeles Lakers to victories.

It helps when the opponent struggles down the stretch as much as the Sacramento Kings did, though.

Bryant scored nine of his 32 points in the final 3:14, leading the Lakers' fourth-quarter comeback for a 98-95 victory over Sacramento on Tuesday night.

Carlos Boozer added 15 points as the Lakers snapped their three-game skid by rallying from a 12-point deficit in the second half. They grinded out a win with a fourth-quarter effort led by Bryant, who managed to conserve just enough energy to take the Lakers over the top.

"I'm hurting," Bryant said. "At halftime, I just lay down and try to put myself mentally in a place where I just block it out and come out and play."

After Bryant tied it at 92 with a breakaway dunk and a clutch 3-pointer, Jordan Hill's layup on a sharp pass from Bryant put the Lakers ahead 94-93 with 1:39 to play.

The Kings went back in front on a driving layup by Darren Collison, but Bryant hit two free throws for the lead with 34 seconds left. Rudy Gay and Nik Stauskas missed 3-pointers in the final 18 seconds for Sacramento, which has lost six of eight.

Nick Young had 12 points for the Lakers. They have won just three of 12 home games this season, but have won 12 of their last 13 at Staples Center against Sacramento.

"Sometimes you're going to have to win games that are ugly," Lakers coach Byron Scott said. "We didn't exactly make shots on a consistent basis, but we made big shots when we had to."

Collison scored 26 points and Gay had 23 for the Kings, who went scoreless in a 4 1/2-minute stretch. Sacramento managed just 14 points on 5-for-17 shooting in the fourth quarter.

"This loss really, really stings," Kings coach Michael Malone said. "It's a bad loss -- not because of who we played. I would never disrespect the Lakers. But for us to have the lead and play as well as we did at times, and then just give it all back and not have the poise to handle the adversity down the stretch, it's a tough loss."

Ben McLemore exceeded his season average with 13 points in the first half alone, pacing the Kings to a 55-46 lead. Bryant missed nine of his 13 shots in the first half.

The Kings took their biggest lead early in the third quarter before Bryant and Young keyed an 18-6 run to keep the Lakers in it.

This overnight jaunt south was Sacramento's only road game in an 11-game stretch of its schedule, smack between two five-game homestands. The Kings haven't left California since Nov. 28, and they won't have to leave again until Dec. 29. ... Collison missed his first five free throws before making his sixth.

LA Galaxy coach Bruce Arena watched the game from courtside 48 hours after winning his fifth MLS Cup championship. ... Carlos Boozer came off the bench for the second straight game after starting his previous 588 NBA games. ... Young completed a four-point play late in the first quarter.

The Kings are back to .500 after their seventh straight game without leading scorer and rebounder DeMarcus Cousins, who is out another week with viral meningitis. "I think he is the best rebounder in the game, so we definitely miss him," Collison said. "But we have other guys that can play pretty much the same way. So there's no excuses on our part. We have guys who can step up and fill that void."

The Lakers had a season-low five turnovers, and are among the NBA's most careful teams with the ball. Bryant committed three of those turnovers, but had the ball in his hands on nearly every possession—particularly while essentially playing point guard down the stretch

Cavaliers 105, Raptors 101

In Cleveland, LeBron James acknowledged that it didn't look good for the Cavaliers on Tuesday night.

As usual when his team is in trouble, he did something about it.

James scored 35 points, making the tiebreaking 3-pointer with 48 seconds remaining, and Cleveland rallied to beat the Toronto Raptors 105-101 for its eighth straight victory.

Toronto, which owns the best record in the Eastern Conference, went ahead midway through the first quarter, built the lead to 14 points late in the third and still led by 10 with about 8 minutes to play.

"I guess it was a little desperation," James said. "You get down on your home floor 13, 14 points, you go out there and control what you can control. That's how hard you play, how hard you defend. The defense got our offense going."

James' jumper from the top of the key gave Cleveland a 102-99 lead and tied him with Mark Price for the franchise record for 3-pointers at 802. James scored 10 points in the fourth, when Cleveland held Toronto to 13 points.

"That was a tough, hard victory," Cleveland coach David Blatt said.

The Cavaliers haven't lost since falling 110-93 to the Raptors at Quicken Loans Arena on Nov. 22, after which James said they were ''fragile." Cleveland got a measure of revenge with a 105-91 win in Toronto on Friday.

The Raptors built a double-figure lead Tuesday, but couldn't hang on in the team's third matchup in 18 days.

"If you want to be an elite team, those are the plays you have to make at the end of the game,"Toronto coach Dwane Casey said. "We had some crucial turnovers and crucial rebounds we didn't get."

Backup guard Matthew Dellavedova provided a boost for Cleveland in the final 12 minutes by hounding Kyle Lowry defensively. Toronto's point guard scored 16 points, but only two in the fourth.

Dellavedova, who missed 15 games with a knee injury, returned Monday against Brooklyn and played the entire final period against Toronto.

"Delly's a guy who's always been counted out, saying he can't make it," James said. "Heart and effort will take away a lot of things you can't do. I'll take a guy like that any day on my team."

Dion Waiters came off the bench for 18 points and Kevin Love added 17.

Jonas Valanciunas and Terrence Ross each scored 18 for Toronto, which had won 39 straight games when leading after three quarters.

Following Lowry's missed shot that hit the top of the backboard, James added a free throw with 14.2 seconds remaining for a four-point lead. Ross' dunk on an offensive rebound with 4.2 seconds left made it 103-101, but Kyrie Irving's two free throws with 3.8 seconds left sealed the win.

Grizzlies 114, Mavericks105

In Memphis, Marc Gasol scored 30 points, Mike Conley added 22 and the Grizzlies withstood 18 Dallas 3-pointers.

Gasol, who was limited to only two points in Sunday's win over Miami, was 9 of 14 from the field and 12 of 13 from the line as Memphis won its second straight. Zach Randolph had 17 points and 13 rebounds, while Tony Allen scored 13 points.

Chandler Parsons led the Mavericks with 30 points, going 10 of 18 from the field and 6 of 10 from 3-point range. Jameer Nelson had a season-high 18 points.

Trail Blazers 98, Pistons 86

In Auburn Hills, LaMarcus Aldridge had 23 points and 11 rebounds, Wesley Matthews scored 19 points, and Portland earned its fifth straight victory.

Detroit lost its 13th in a row, one short of the franchise record set in 1979-80 and tied in 1993-94. Those were both aging teams, with the second group marking the end of the Bad Boys era at the Palace. The current Pistons haven't had a winning season or won a playoff game in seven years.

Greg Monroe had 22 points and 10 rebounds for Detroit, which only got 40 points from its starting lineup.

Jazz 100, Spurs 96

In Salt Lake City, Derrick Favors scored 21 points, Gordon Hayward added 20 and Utah snapped a nine-game losing streak.

Enes Kanter added 12 points and 15 rebounds for his fourth double-double of the season, while Alec Burks chipped in 14 points for Utah, which lost all four games against the Spurs last season.

Tim Duncan had 23 points and 13 rebounds for San Antonio. Kawhi Leonard added 16 points for the Spurs, who played without starting point guard Tony Parker.

Utah outrebounded San Antonio 43-37, although the Spurs had a 62-50 advantage in points in the paint.

Pelicans 104, Knicks 93

In New Orleans, Tyreke Evans scored 27 points, Anthony Davis had 18 and the Pelicans handed the reeling Knicks their ninth straight loss.

Omer Asik had 16 points and 14 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday scored 13 points for New Orleans, which won its second straight to pull back to .500 at 10-10.

Amare Stoudemire scored a season-high 26 points and Carmelo Anthony had 17 for New York, which kept the game close into the fourth quarter before fading down the stretch, as the Knicks have done often this season.

Pablo Prigioni scored 17 for the Knicks, who fell to 4-19 with what was also their 10th straight road loss.

Thunder 114, Bucks101

In Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant scored 23 points in his first home game of the season, leading Oklahoma City to the victory.

Durant, the reigning MVP, missed the first 17 games with a broken bone in his right foot, and then played three road games before making his home debut. He also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Russell Westbrook scored 28 points for the Thunder, who have won five of six after starting the season with a 3-12 record.

O.J. Mayo had 18 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 17 for the Bucks, who have lost five of six.

Heat 103, Suns 97

In Phoenix, Chris Bosh scored 10 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter, including seven straight down the stretch, and Miami snapped a four-game losing streak.

Luol Deng scored 23 points and Dwyane Wade added 16 for the Heat.

Miami has won nine straight against the Suns, and eight straight in Phoenix.

Marcus Morris scored a career-high 25 points for Phoenix on 10-of-13 shooting. Gerald Green added 19 points, including five 3-pointers, and Markieff Morris had 17.

Phoenix has lost three straight.

Soccer pro to conduct football clinics on Tinian

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Football clinics will be conducted on Tinian this week by professional soccer player and program head for the Pilipinas Dragons Football Club Nii Ayi.

After completing a training course in Guam, Ayi will be bringing his skills to Tinian Premier Football Club.

"I took my FIFA Grassroots Course in Guam and I feel like taking this opportunity to give to the kids what I learned from my FIFA instructor from Malaysia," he told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview.

Ayi, a sports scientist and licensed coach, will host classroom interactions with local coaches to guide them on how to organize and plan a football program and training session.

"I will have presentation with the schools on Tinian to help the kids improve their football lifestyle on and off the pitch," he added.

The presentation will take place throughout the week at the Tinian Junior and Senior High School campus at 10am, along with an afternoon field session at 4pm.

Ayi said the organization is a unique one as it is primarily run by parents who "love the game and see their kids playing long term".

This is Ayi's first visit to the islands, as the club was founded just recently. However, clinics and offices have been established globally.

"We help the less privileged kids, who can't afford to buy their own football kits, play football by providing them kits and organizing charity matches for them," he said.

Pilipinas Dragons also offers scholarships to eligible high school students interested in the sport.

Ayi's trip is sponsored by Mizuno sportswear, which also donated soccer balls, vests, and training shorts to the Tinian club along with the PDFC.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Professional soccer player and program head for the Pilipinas Dragons Football Club Nii Ayi will conduct clinics on Tinian this week.

Pacific Games entry by numbers due in January

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Michael A. White reminded member federations sending athletes to the 2015 Pacific Games that the entry by numbers is due on Jan 16.

So far, only six sports associations confirmed their participation to the 15th edition of the quadrennial multi-sport event to be hosted by Papua New Guinea for the third time since 1991. The Games are set from July 4 to 18 in Port Moresby.

Athletics, beach volleyball, bodybuilding, golf, tennis, and va'a have expressed their interest to send athletes in the quadrennial games.

The initial tally will have the CNMI sending a 29-member delegation composed of two athletes and one coach in athletics, men's and women's teams in beach volleyball, two male and two female in bodybuilding, a four-man team in golf, four male, and two female plus coach in tennis, and a seven-member crew in va'a.

White said he has yet to hear from softball, table tennis, and weightlifting since all three sports associations are inactive from quite some time. Sailing, swimming, basketball, football (soccer and beach soccer), triathlon and indoor volleyball decided not to join this year's Pacific Games.

Boxing, cricket, hockey, karate, lawn bowls, powerlifting, rugby 7s, rugby league, shooting, squash, taekwondo and touch rugby are the other sports that will be played in the Papua New Guinea games, but they are not played or there are no active federation here in the CNMI.

White said the airfare costs $1,200 per person with the CNMI delegation traveling to Manila via United for the connecting Air New Guinea flight to Port Moresby. The per diem is free.

In other news, the CNMI can send at least two athletes and one coach to the 2015 University Games, which will happen simultaneously with the Pacifc Games.

NMSA vice president and former Northern Marianas Athletics president Dr. Kurt Barnes will be the CNMI's chef de mission to the Summer Universiade set from July 3 to 14 in Gwangju, South Korea.

White has yet to receive word from the International University Sports Federation on the details of the per diem and airfare.

WSR

From Page 28

terday with his first one made in the 15th minute. Sebastian Manabat drilled the second one four minutes later, giving WSR a 2-0 halftime edge.

Mariago also registered WSR's first goal in the second half (25th minute), while Taidon Langu also made it to the board off a header in the 29th minute. Mariago capped his long-game brilliance with back-to-back goals with the last one off a header and with only one minute left in the match. Mariago's third goal was logged in the 37th minute, while Koblerville's two goals came from Chan Yang Woo and Luis Claridades.

The WSR forward also tallied the team's three goals in their close victory over Dandan, including the insurance in the 32nd minute of the match. Mariago converted the first two in the second and fourth minute, while Dandan lit up the board for the first time in the 31st off Neil Brian Sagum's shot. Sagum also scored Dandan's second goal in the 37th minute.

Meanwhile, SIS also prevailed against Dandan, 4-0, yesterday to duplicate WSR's perfect 2-0 record in the semis round.

The shutout win was a fitting follow-up on the Geckos' 8-0 demolition of Koblerville last Tuesday. Rintaro Miyawaki starred in SIS' rout of Koblerville after making a hat-trick. Do Hyeon Kim added two goals, while Brian Youn, Go Sekiguchi, and Daniele Colombo added one apiece. The names of SIS' scorers against Dandan were unavailable at press time.

The Geckos, who finished second to Whispering Palms last season, and the Kingfishers conclude the round-robin semis today when they collide at Hopwood. Regardless of the results of today's match, SIS and WSR are already assured of the finals stint as they both defeated Koblerville and Dandan in the single-elimination playoffs.

The Geckos and Kingfishers advanced to the semis after finishing in the Top 2 in the North Group, which also includes Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School and Garapan Elementary School. In the South Group, Koblerville and Dandan took the Top 2 spots against San Vicente Elementary School and Kagman Elementary School.

Meanwhile, results of the girls semis round will be reported in *Saipan Tribune's* Friday edition.

SBC

From Page 28

Badminton Club, last week's second placer, fell to third with 39 markers. Three points are awarded to a team that wins a match in two games, while 2 points are given to the winning squad and one to its opponent if the match goes to three.

SBC faced CBC in last week's matches at the TSL Sports Complex in Gualo Rai and quickly collected 9 points after successive 2-game wins in the men's B, BC and A divisions, respectively.

Yun Jun Lee and Han Cheol Yu started things off for SBC, as they easily overpowered CBC newcomers John Costales and Owen Ou, 21-9, 21-6. Daniel Kim and Jongmin Lee followed it up with a hard-earned 21-18, 21-18 decision over the pair of Zeke Macario and Jeremi Montenejo.

Glenn Buultjens, the Northern Marianas Sports Association November Male Athlete of the Month, teamed up with Sam Jones in completing a 21-18, 21-14 win over CBC pair Andreau Galvez and Jordan Pangilinan.

Buultjens and Jones, in both games, trailed as Galvez and Pangelinan had a little help from their unforced errors. The SBC pair, down 14-9 in the second game, dug deep from their bag of tricks by scoring 12 straight points to seal the win.

Havika Farro and Nicole Malasarte gave CBC its first and only win after escaping with a 21-18, 17-21, 21-14 victory over SBC's Dianne Francisco and Rowena Sison.

Hannah Choi, in the last match of the day, exacted some sort of revenge as she partnered with Marlene Pareja in dealing Janelle Pangilinan and Jen Savellano a 21-17, 21-17 drubbing. Choi with Sison as her partner squandered their twice-to-beat edge and lost to Pangilinan and Savellano in the finals of last month's Tan Holdings Open 2014 badminton tournament.

Shirley's overtook CBC at second place after a 10-5 tally against Golden Racquets. The pairs of Hapi Gabriel and Macoi Aguda and Lani Bartolome and Windy Fernandez gave Shirley's 3 points each in the men's and women's A doubles. Gabriel and Aguda downed Gary Bandoja and Edwin Maratas, 21-16, 21-18, while Bartolome and Fernandez tripped Ana Omori and Cheng Saturno, 21-16, 21-17.

The tandem of Lucelle Lampera and Marylyn Montano gave Golden Racquets its lone win after posting a 21-13, 21-17 triumph over Jaja Bocago and Annette Ta in the women's doubles B. Shirley's scored 2-1 wins in the men's B and men's BC divisions.

SJ

From Page 28

throws in the final canto. The Rollers A continued to struggle on offense in the second half, as only Emerson Feria made more than one field goal for the team in the payoff canto.

In the first semis match, KFC led from start to finish, withstanding every Saints' comeback bid to march into the finals.

Jethro Cruz paced KFC with his 16 points, while Shane Deleon Guerrero and Dixon Kwon also finished in twin digits with 14 and 10, respectively.

The U18 finale between KFC and SJ Ol'Aces will be played this Saturday at 11:30am, while the Rollers A and Saints duel for the third place trophy at 10am.

First Game

KFC 68–Cruz 16, Deleon Guerrero 14, Kwon 10, Darag 9, Javier 7, Francisco 5, Alipio 2.

CK Saints 58–Espinosa 26, Lansang 14, Fidelino 8, Nakashima 68, Pialur 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-10, 27-19, 48-43, 68-58.

Second Game

SJ Ol'Aces 47–De Leon 13, Borja 12, Epity 7, Mendoza 5, D. Sablan 4, Cruz 2.

Rollers A 41– Arciaga 17, Factor 13, Feria 8, Malonzo 3.

Scoring by quarters: 8-7, 16-21, 31-26, 47-41.

JERICHO

From Page 27

Cruz told *Saipan Tribune*.

Ginebra big man Jay-R Reyes was defending Cruz when the ROS guard was attempting for a baseline drive. Jonathan Uyloan was tapped to check in for Cruz after the latter signaled to the Elasto Painters' bench that he needed to be replaced midway in the fourth quarter.

"I told coach Yeng Guiao that I can no longer play, I can't stay inside the court, because the pain was killing me. It was unbearable. So he instructed my teammates to foul to force a deadball situation so I could get subbed," the PBA rookie said.

Cruz then went to the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital in San Juan City after the game for a check-up and doctors found out that he suffered a bone fracture on his left foot.

"I'm out for the rest of the semifinals and if ever finals," added Cruz, who usually comes off the bench for Rain or Shane and is one of the best rookies in the open court.

Cruz posted per game averages of 8.0 points, 3.0 rebounds, 2.1 assists and 1.9 steals. He had his best game in the conference in that win over Alaska as he finished with 16 markers, 6 rebounds, 4 assists, and 3 steals to earn the Best Player of the Game honors.

Cruz's injury could pose problems in Guiao's rotation since shooting guard Chris Tiu and forward Jervy Cruz are still out with injuries.

Rain or Shine, after a 99-76 thrashing they received from Talk 'N Text last month, swept their last seven games to finish tied with San Miguel Beermen in first place with their similar 9-2 records and earn the first two automatic semifinals berths. The Beermen clinched the top ranking and relegated the Elasto Painters to No. 2 by virtue of their 87-79 win over the latter early in the conference.

HELL

From Page 27

prefecture native

The early morning rain failed to help the weather condition improve as it only made the race course more challenging.

"I am still thankful that I had a safe ride. I have to slow down in every downhill since it was slippery. I was really scared because there are portions of the road that are still wet," added Nakamura, who is one of Japan's top cyclists.

Other riders were not that lucky with one cyclist crashing and nearly hit by a car right after the San Vicente area going to Isa Drive. Florence Antonio and a female rider were also nearly hit by a car when the driver failed to see them as he was about to turn to Joeten Garapan.

Tyce Mister suffered a flat tire, but Romy Lanuza and his crew were there to help the former. Another Korean rider almost suffered from dehydration due to the punishing heat going toward the Saipan Radar as he was seen lying on the road. He was just merely resting and proceeded to finish the final kilometers of the race.

Meanwhile, in the team relay division results, R-Joe was the fastest 4-member men's team to finish the 63-mile race with its last rider reaching the finish line at 4:04:07. Team Bat of Tinian came in second at 4:30:51, while ReeJ Team finished third (4:49:55).

Beauty and the Beast topped the mixed team with a time of 4:47:50, followed by Pacific Islands Club 4-Wheel Drive (4:51:38) and Haggan (4:58:15).

God Father (4:08:32), G&L (4:22:59) and Summer of 53 (4:47:44) were the Top 3 finishers in the 2-member men's squad, while Saipan's Team Sato (5:13:38) bested Guam's Weekend Road Warriors (5:40:00) in the women's division. Tinian's Bat 2 (4:08:32), D&H (4:16:39) and Father & Daughter (4:20:03) finished 1-2-3 in the 2-member mixed team.

Guam pair tops men's over 40 doubles

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam's George Lai and Eddie Wu survived a three-set finale to win the men's over 40 doubles championship in last weekend's 6th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic.

The visiting players were pitted against Saipan's Ken Imaya and Joe Quitugua in the title match at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan tennis courts and dropped the opening set, 2-6, before sweeping the last two sets, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) to nail the come-from-behind win.

George Lai and Wu were at the bottom half of the draw and gained the group's finals berth after recording two straight-set wins. The eventual champions first swept Diony Peralta and Nonoy Masinda, 6-2, 6-2, last Friday at Fiesta before easing past Gary Ramsey and Noel Biglete last Saturday's semifinals, 6-1, 6-2.

In the other semis pairing, Imaya and Quitugua needed three sets to dethrone 2013 champions David and Sam Lai, 6-1, 4-6, 10-8. Imaya and Quitugua set a semis date with the deposed champions after a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Jorge Olanda and George Poquiz. David and Sam Lai, on the other hand, gained the automatic semis seat in the upper half of the bracket for drawing a bye in the first round.

In the men's Open doubles, Luke Beling had a new partner in Peter Loken and the two veteran players won over junior bets Tommy Choi and Moris Villanueva in the finals, 6-3, 6-4.

Beling, who teamed up with CNMI coach Jeff Race in conquering last year's men's Open doubles, and Loken were incidentally paired against Race and Dun Dunlop in the semis and won their first match in the division, 6-1, 6-3, to advance to the finals in the upper half of the bracket.

In the lower half of the draw, Villanueva and Choi prevailed against fellow junior players Michael Ren and Luther Lizama, 6-4, 7-5, to notch the second finals ticket. Ren and Lizama made it to the semis after slipping past Don Lacbayo and Richard Asuncion, 4-6, 6-2, 11-9.

In the men's doubles 3.0, after missing the over 40 crown, Quitugua finally entered the champions circle as he teamed up with Adonis Capiendo in downing Chris Park and Gabriele Colombo in the finals, 6-4, 4-6, 10-8.

Quitugua and Capiendo barged into the finals after a victory via default over David Steinberg and Ron Wright and a semis triumph against junior players Clayton Izuka and Alex Park, 6-4, 6-0, in the bottom half of the draw. At the top half of the draw, Chris Park and Colombo took the finals berth following their wins over father and son Randy and Richard Steele, 6-1, 6-1, and Jaime Hagos and Romy Pandoro, 6-0, 6-0.

Meanwhile, Imaya and Don Castillo and Vickie Izuka and Mayling Colombo completed the doubles champions list of the annual tournament. Castillo and Imaya claimed the men's 4.0 doubles crown, while Vickie and Mayling notched the women's 3.0 tiara.

Vickie and Mayling prevailed in a round-robin contest, winning over Maaya and C. Sato, 7-6 (7-5), 5-0 (retired) and against Caitlin Tinney and Norma Ada, 6-0, 6-2.

Imaya and Castillo topped the seven-team draw, clinching the division championship after sweeping Bong Gamab and Boboy Sergio, 6-3, 6-2. The eventual champions advanced to the finals after scoring a semis win over Robbie Schorr and J.R. Jacinto, 6-1, 6-2, while Sergio and Gamab made it to the title match following a 6-4, 6-2 win against junior players Colin Ramsey and Sean Lee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
George Lai, left, and Eddie Wu, wait for the ball from their opponents Ken Imaya and Joe Quitugua during their men's over 40 doubles title game in the 6th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic last Sunday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan tennis courts.

Jericho out for Philippine Cup

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jericho Cruz saw his rookie season with Rain or Shine cut short after he injured his foot during the Elasto Painters' 100-90 win over Barangay Ginebra in the Philippine Basketball Association Philippine Cup last Dec. 7 at the Smart Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

Cruz, who about a week ago earned Best Player of the Game honors in Rain or Shine's come-from-behind 98-95 victory over Alaska, fractured his foot after attempting to drive to the basket.

The 24-year-old former Adamson Falcon, the ninth overall pick in this year's draft, said he was driving to the baseline when he accidentally fell down and heard his foot pop.

"But I didn't feel it maybe because of the adrenaline rush. I still played and even run up and down the court like 5 to 6 times. After that, that's when I felt the pain,"

See JERICHO on Page 26

KC CRUZ
Jericho Cruz celebrates with teammate Jonathan Uyloan, partly hidden, after Rain or Shine's win against Alaska. Cruz, however, will miss the remainder of the postseason after suffering a bone fracture on his left foot.

Japanese biker to bounce back in next year's 'Hell'

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Expect Ryutaro Nakamura to return in next year's 8th Annual Hell of the Marianas century cycle race with the Japanese rider vowing to finish on top of the podium in the ninth edition of the CNMI's most grueling bicycle event.

Nakamura led in the early part of the race going to the four corners—Banzai Cliff, Bird Island, Grotto and Suicide Cliff. He was part of the lead group that included eventual champion Konstantin Fast and runner-up Alexander Dorovskikh of Russia. The three riders alternately held the lead before Fast slowly pulled away when the lead group was riding out of Kingfisher.

Fast ruled the event as he crossed the finish line in front of Mariana Resort and Spa in 2:49:22, while Dorovskikh came in second with a time of 2:51:41, and Nakamura finished third (2:56:13).

"This was the first time that I joined here and I'm happy that I placed third. I could have finished higher but it was a very tough race," said the 23-year-old through an interpreter.

"The temperature was too high. I really felt the heat, especially going out of Kingfisher where the sun was behind our backs. The conditions were really tough. It was humid with little wind," added the Chiba

See HELL on Page 26

JON PEREZ
Japan's Ryutaro Nakamura remains in high spirits as he nears the finish line of last Saturday's 100-kilometer Hell of the Marianas race in front of the Mariana Resort and Spa in Marpi.

Guam pair tops men's over 40 doubles

PAGE 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Lester, Cubs agree to $155M deal

PAGE 24

WSR vs SIS in IFL boys finale

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
William S. Reyes Elementary School players and coaches huddle after winning against Koblerville Elementary School in the semis round of the 2014 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League yesterday at the WSR Field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

William S. Reyes Elementary School and Saipan International School locked the two finals berths in the 2014 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League after earning unbeaten records in the semifinal round of the annual tournament.

WSR went 2-0 in the four-team semis round, following a 6-2 victory over Koblerville Elementary School at the former's home turf yesterday. The Kingfishers' other win came last Tuesday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field against Dandan Middle School, 3-2.

The Jude Loste-coached WSR leaned on Ian Mariago to win its first two games. Mariago scored four of the Kingfishers' goals against Koblerville yes-

See WSR on Page 26

SJ Ol'Aces duel KFC for U18 title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Top 2 seeds San Jose Ol'Aces and Kentucky Fried Chicken arranged their title showdown in the U18 division of the 2014 BANMI Youth League after prevailing in separate semis matches last Tuesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

KFC bagged the first finals seat after a 68-58 win over the Chalan Kanoa Saints in the opening semis tiff, while in the second game, the Ol'Aces edged the Rollers A, 47-41.

The Ol'Aces secured the second finals ticket after holding the Rollers A to 5 points in the third period. Before the third-quarter meltdown, the Rollers A enjoyed a 21-16 halftime lead over the Ol'Aces. Mike Arciaga scored 14 first-half points to put the Rollers A on top, while Prince Factor added 6.

In the third period, Arciaga was scoreless and the entire Rollers A crew was held to one field goal off Irvin Malonzo's triple and two free throws from Factor.

The Ol'Aces, on the other hand, drew baskets from four players with three of them making at least two field goals. Dustin Sablan had 5 straight points, while Karlo De Leon and Ignacio Borja added 4 apiece. Kobee Mendoza was the other Ol'Aces player to hit the board in the third period, drilling the team's last field goal in that quarter.

The Ol'Aces went on to protect their advantage behind De Leon's successive baskets early in the fourth, while Mendoza and Borja provided the insurance shots. De Leon knocked in 7 straight baskets, while Mendoza hit a pair of charities, and Borja scored 3 of the Ol'Aces last 6 points.

The Rollers A failed to bounce back from the third-quarter collapse, as Arciaga could not get his rhythm back, making only one field goal and three free

See SJ on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The San Jose Ol'Aces' Kobee Mendoza goes up for a shot against the Rollers B's Angelo Factor, right, and Jude Tengco during their earlier playoff game in the U18 division of the BANMI youth caging. The Ol'Aces defeated the Rollers B's sister team Rollers A in the semifinals last Tuesday, 47-41.

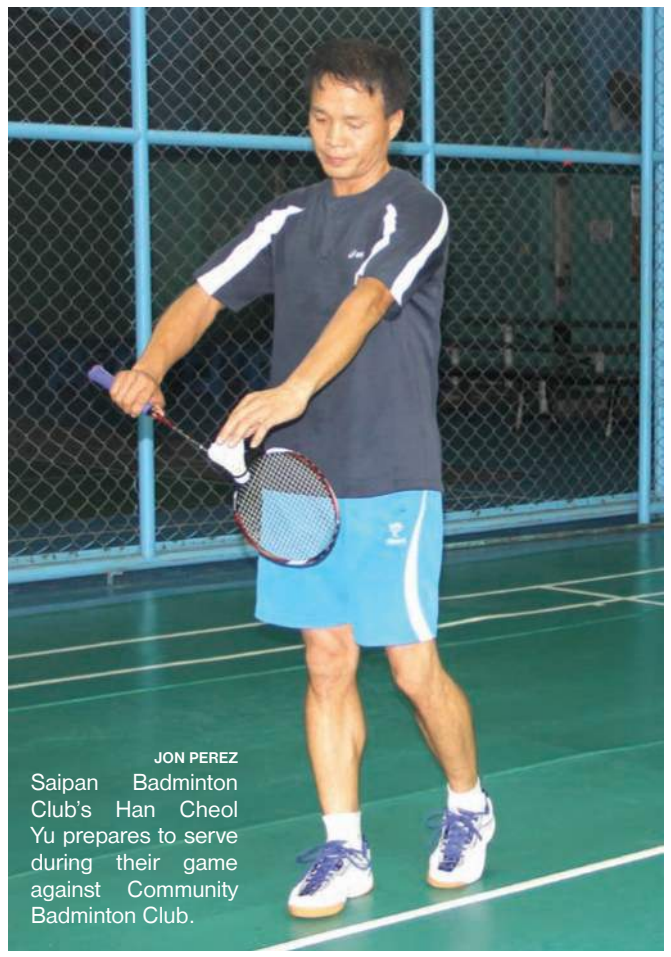
SBC on its way to clinching top seed

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Defending three-time champion Saipan Badminton Club is on its way to clinching the first finals berth in the 8th Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament.

SBC, aiming to win a fourth straight crown, has already collected 58 markers for a 12-point advantage over second running Shirley's Badminton Club's 46. Community

See SBC on Page 26



JON PEREZ
Saipan Badminton Club's Han Cheol Yu prepares to serve during their game against Community Badminton Club.